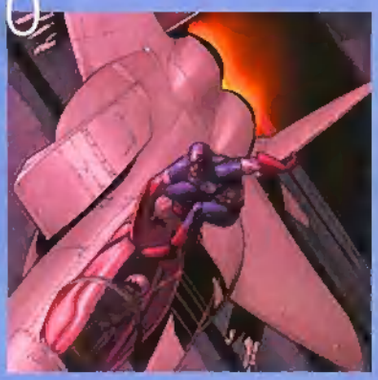
TOP 10 MOMENTS OF CIVIL WAR

There were tons of huge moments from *Civil War*, and we here in the Spotlight offices, led by Irving Forbush's cousin Madge, came up with our own list of the Top 10! Now, if you're reading this issue of *Spotlight* before reading any of CW, A) you're really weird, and B) you have our permission to go read the darned thing and then come back and compare your list with ours. These moments will pay off for some time in ways both large and small, broad and subtle, and spoken and unspoken in the pages of our favorite Marvel Comics. So here are the Top 10 Moments of Civil War, starting with #10 and working our way up!

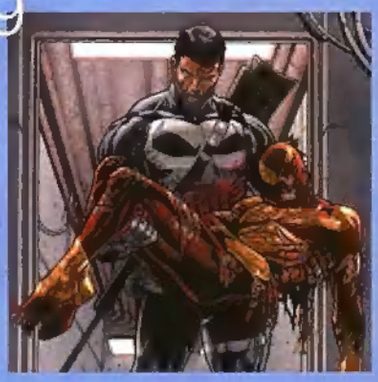
10



CAP ESCAPES FROM SHIELD • CIVIL WAR #1

This barn-burning episode really raised the stakes for each super-hero's personal struggle with the aftermath of Stamford. For many, this was a clear example of the government kicking the chair out from under Cap. If the government can't trust someone like Cap, who can they trust? Chasing America's Sentinel of Liberty out the window of the SHIELD Helicarrier under a hail of bullets while thousands of feet over American soil doesn't exactly inspire a super-hero to feel very trusting, does it? But leaving the philosophical implications aside, this action-packed and tautly executed escape scene by Millar and McNiven was one of the earliest, and biggest, moments in *Civil War*.

9



PUNISHER TO THE RESCUE • CIVIL WAR #5

Making a surprise appearance on the doorstep of Cap's Secret Avengers HQ, bearing the gift of Spider-Man, is none other than the Bernie Goetz of the super-human set, the Punisher. Readers around the world got quite the gut punch during this moment, but imagine how Cap felt when someone like Frank Castle shows up and says, "I'm joining the party"? To achieve victory, a good captain needs as many able bodies as he can get, but sometimes common sense can evade you when you're making alliances. Is all fair in love and Civil War, or does the inevitable mayhem that followed diminish Cap's legacy as a warrior who wouldn't cut corners on honor and dignity?

8

MEET THE YANCY STREET GANG • FANTASTIC FOUR #538-539

They've thrown cream pies, deployed whoopee cushions, and called in hundreds of fake pizza deliveries in an effort to disgrace their nemesis Ben Grimm over the years, all from the relative safety of the tenement shadows of Yancy Street. It was the occasion of the Civil War between heroes, however, where the gang would find the courage to come out into the light and take a side. Their emergence from off-panel obscurity was a "whoah" moment for all longtime FF fans; the death of their leader was an equally transformative moment for Ben Grimm.

7

THE COMING OF THOR! • CIVIL WAR #3

Okay, so maybe the impact of this scene was diluted a bit when, in *CW #4*, it was revealed that it wasn't really the noble Thor that was called in as the cavalry for Iron Man's pro-reg forces, but "Clor," the cyborg developed by Reed, Hank and Tony Stark to put a little "shock and awe" into their first confrontation with Cap's array of Secret Avengers. And admit it, it did the trick. (Go ahead, you can admit it.)

Stopping Cap's resistance army (and readers of *Civil War*) dead in their tracks, the introduction of Thor, even if it was only a kooky robot, had the tactical purpose of delivering a "You mean to tell me we're up against our old buddy who we thought was dead and oh snap we're gonna totally lose this thing now!!!" moment that could have decisively crushed the resistance. If only Clor hadn't, like, *mercilessly killed Goliath!* Then the tactic might have worked! But as often happens in wartime, nobody who was on the scene during that fateful battle will easily forget what happened, nor easily forgive the men who allowed it.

6

SPEEDBALL'S TRANSFORMATION INTO PENANCE • CIVIL WAR: FRONT LINE #1

The way I think about Speedball is, if Joe Quesada couldn't kill him, what chance did Nitro have? That Joey Q is one canny guy. The ultimate misdirect: talk for *years* about offing that dopey kid with the unsalable name ("Mom, can I borrow three bucks to go buy a *Speedball?*" doesn't work. Trust me: I've tried.) Then, in the opening moments of your Civil War extravaganza, cast him as the metaphorical pin of the grenade that starts the whole blamed thing rolling. Finally, have Steve McNiven bury him under a mushroom cloud and it's all over but the crying.

Heh. That's what you think. Enter Paul Jenkins and the revelation in *Civil War Front Line #1* that Speedball didn't die, he just *bounced* his way across New York state, landed in a barren field, and was swept into the kind of "Road to Redemption" tale that can only end inside a costume tripped out like an iron maiden. Joe Quesada knows how to dispense the quality of mercy, don't he?

5

MEET THE "NEW" NEW THUNDERBOLTS • CIVIL WAR #4

To be a Thunderbolt has always meant engaging in an uphill struggle to get simple respect from government officials and the public. (Try to take over the world once and that'll happen to you!) But we all know that for most of the T'Bolts, this uphill struggle has been pursued with the utmost of sincerity. And where's it gotten them over the years? Hey, this is the Marvel Universe – you know the routine! Not very far!

So now, let me get this straight: you line up a bunch of wicked nasties like Venom, Bullseye, the Jester and Taskmaster, call them "Thunderbolts" and suddenly everything's cool with the guv'ment? The last page of *Civil War #4* was one of those "drop the bag of popcorn" moments that showed readers just how far out of control this *Civil War* was on its way to getting. (*Bullseye a T'Bolt?* Charcoal is rolling over in his grave, y'all!!!)

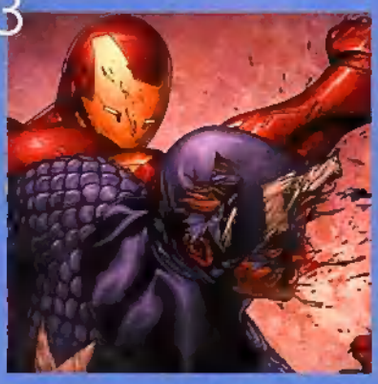
4

DEATH OF GOLIATH • CIVIL WAR #4

Civil War was probably the first time comics fans had seen Goliath in, like, forever! I still remember hunting down each issue of his five-issue series from 1975 to complete my collection (naturally titled *Black Goliath* — hey, it was the thing back then). It's not like his character has ever been super-popular; he's never been affiliated with any super-teams of note or given a long run as a compelling supporting cast member in any ongoing books. So it was refreshing to see ol' Bill Foster get prime real estate in the early issues of *CW*.

And then he had to face off against Clor and utter those famous last words: "Get ready for the shortest comeback in history, Thor." He didn't ask me, but I'd have told him: don't square off against Thor — or even a crazy, wacked out, clone of Thor — and trash talk like *that!* Because if you do, there'll be an Imitation, Asgardian hammer-full of lethal, electrical energy on its way to cut a hole in a brother! Look out, Luke Cage! You and your "unbreakable" skin might be next!

3



CAP VERSUS IRON MAN • CIVIL WAR #3-4, 7

Bonded as brothers in the Avengers, like two sides of the same coin (heck, they shared the *Tales of Suspense* anthology for almost four years!), the relationship between Cap and Iron Man should never have gotten *this* bad! Sure, they've had their rough patches over the years, as anybody who has recently reread the *Avengers: Galactic Storm* epic can attest. But when two of the Marvel Universe's greatest gladiators met on opposite lines of the Civil War, it provided some of the most unthinkable moments in Marvel history. First, Cap was on the receiving end of a well-sprung trap laid by Iron Man's pro-reg forces; it became clear that any previous disagreements between the pair had never paid off *this* viciously. And finally, in the climax of *Civil War*, Steve Rogers realized there was no virtue left in fighting it out with Iron Man, that to lead by example was the only option remaining.

2

SPIDER-MAN UNMASKS • CIVIL WAR #2

The moment nobody saw coming until it hit Newsweek, CNN and Drudge Report. And then EVERYBODY saw it! Peter Parker revealing his identity? *Huh what huh?!?!?* Spider-Man approaches a podium with cameras and microphones jammed in his face. Would he be declaring that he had *finally* shut down the Ringmaster and his Circus of Crime once and for all? Or would he say, "I did not sleep with that woman, Miss Felecia Hardy!" Or perhaps announcing he was joining the X-Men in a series written by Bendis? (That last one's a joke, folks! Bendis would never do something like that!)

Any one of those announcements would have been worthy of the front page of the Daily Bugle, but that's not what happened. No, Spider-Man *went and took his freakin' mask off!* Spider-Man is Peter Parker.....And with that, we have a *Civil War* moment that will unleash a thousand more delicious Spidey stories down the line (cue "Back in Black," on sale now!)

1

DEATH OF CAPTAIN AMERICA • CAPTAIN AMERICA #25

Ain't nothin' to say about this other than: Cap...We salute you. Godspeed.

AFTERMATH: THE CASUALTIES OF WAR

Marvel Spotlight looks back at the roll call of the dead...the heroes, villains and ordinary people whose lives were ended when the forces of Marvel's Civil War were first sparked and then began to slowly spiral out of control.

NIGHT THRASHER

Killed in Civil War #1

All Night Thrasher wanted to do was change the world. At first it seemed so simple: he was young, angry, and rich. He had a multinational business, a suit of armor, and a skateboard. What else did he need? But somewhere along the line, it all went wrong...his Taylor Foundation bought out from under him, reduced to signing a deal with a reality TV show that broadcast their adventures, Thrash and the New Warriors inadvertently caused the massive explosion at Stamford that took the lives of over 600 civilians and caused the Superhuman Registration Act to be signed into law. Killed in the explosion, Night Thrasher will never know the cruel irony – that he and the Warriors ended up changing the world after all...

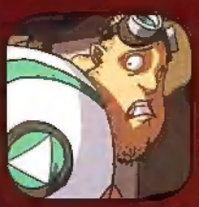
NAMORITA

Killed in Civil War #1

Namorita wasn't just a member of the New Warriors, she was Atlantean royalty. Fiercely protective of her homeland and the ocean, she had occasionally ruled Atlantis in Namor's stead, and fought valiantly and courageously to defend her kingdom. Her warrior spirit was what made her so effective in battle, and it was why Night Thrasher couldn't take no for an answer when he was transforming the New Warriors into a reality TV show. Unfortunately, that very same warrior spirit was what caused Namorita to leap directly into hand-to-hand combat with Nitro. Caught literally at ground zero when he exploded, this fearless action would be Nita's last – and would cause her to become the very first casualty of the Civil War.

MICROBE

Killed in Civil War #1



Microbe tried so hard. All he could do was talk to germs, and he wasn't exactly in the best of shape to be a superhero – but when his adoptive father, Night Thrasher, asked him to join the New Warriors as part of their new reality show, he wanted so badly to please him. So Microbe figured out creative ways to use his little friends to help fight super-villains – and he put himself in harm's way time and again, trusting in Thrash to pull the team through. Unfortunately, his trust and his good intentions cost him his life. Incinerated in the blast at Stamford, Microbe died just trying to do the right thing – and history will forever vilify him for it.

COBALT MAN

Killed in Civil War #1

The Cobalt Man was dead. Wasn't he? He'd been dead for years, ever since he blew himself up to try to kill the villain named Egghead. They even found his body – part of it, anyway. So who's been running around in his armor? Whoever it was, he popped up recently, received a vicious beating from the Hulk and was sent to Ryker's. Escaping, he ran afoul of the New Warriors in Stamford – but not even his cobalt armor could save him from Nitro's detonation. Was the original Cobalt Man back from seeming death? Was someone new wearing the armor? Unfortunately, now we'll never know...

COLDHEART

Killed in Civil War #1

Poor Coldheart had a tragic life. Her son was killed – by all accounts, an innocent bystander in a superhuman altercation involving Spider-Man – and she spiraled into rage and madness. Formerly a government agent, she took her swords and armor and went rogue, attacking heroes and villains alike – hating them all for their casual attitude toward collateral damage and civilian casualties. Poor Coldheart, she had no way of knowing that she would become exactly what she hated most – that her fatal battle with the New Warriors at Stamford would lead to the deaths of sixty schoolchildren...

SPEEDFREEK

Killed in Civil War #1

Speedfreek was a vicious contract killer. Sure, he was addicted to a powerful drug called Snap, but that's no excuse. He killed for fun, he killed for profit, he killed without remorse. He stole the armor that gave him his super-speed powers, then killed the previous owner. By all accounts, he was completely irredeemable. Unfortunately for him, he didn't have his armor on when the New Warriors ambushed him in Stamford – and he couldn't outrun Nitro's massive explosion. The one bright side to this story of violence, however, is that at least now nobody else will ever suffer at his hands...

DON FERNANDEZ

Killed in Civil War #1

Don Fernandez knew the risks. Before he became the cameraman for the New Warriors' reality show, he was a wartime correspondent – recording and reporting on scenes of bloodshed and violence from around the globe. Dodging bullets and bombs, hunkering down in trenches from Baghdad to Bosnia, all for the opportunity to record history in the making. He considered the Warriors assignment his big break – a chance to make Hollywood money doing what he loved. Unfortunately for Don, recording their exploits turned out to be every bit as dangerous as reporting on a war – and when the Warriors fought Nitro, his luck ran out. Don Fernandez, who had survived dozens of wars around the world, lost his life in the opening shots of a Civil War right here at home.

BANTAM

Killed in Civil War: Front Line #3

The Battling Bantam always tried to do the right thing. Given super-strength by the Power Broker, he could have used his abilities to further his boxing career – but instead he retired, becoming a personal trainer. When the Superhuman Registration Act was passed, he could have simply registered and gone back to his career – but instead he donned his costume and attempted to help bring in those who refused. And that was his downfall. During a battle with an obscure hero called Thunderclap, Bantam was knocked into a gas truck, and killed when it exploded. Tragically, doing what he thought was the right thing...cost Bantam everything.

GOLIATH

Killed in Civil War #4

Dr. Bill Foster's life would have been completely different if not for Henry Pym. If Pym hadn't needed a lab assistant years ago, Foster never would have met the Avengers in the first place. If not for his Pym Particles, Foster never would have become the size-changing hero, Goliath, and become fiercely loyal to Captain America and the Avengers – loyal enough to follow Cap underground when the Registration Act was passed. And if Pym hadn't helped to create a cyborg clone of Thor – a clone that ran amok during a battle between pro-registration and anti-registration heroes, killing Goliath with a lightning bolt in the dead center of his chest – Dr. Bill Foster would still be alive today.

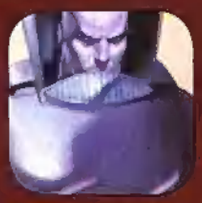
DIGITEK

Killed in Civil War: Front Line #6

Digitek ought to be used to getting the shaft from authority. After all, it was the evil Mys-Tech Corporation that tried to kill him, leading to his becoming a being of pure energy in the first place. So it was surprising that, after being arrested for failure to register and then incarcerated in Negative Zone Prison Alpha, Digitek succumbed to despair and took his own life – morphing his arm into a gun and blowing his own head off. But, can a being made of energy truly die of a gunshot wound? Was Digitek's suicide an act of cowardice and despair – or an escape attempt? And, if the latter...did it work?

STILT-MAN

Killed in Punisher War Journal vol. 2 #1



Stilt-Man was always pretty much a joke. His super-powered suit allowed him to tower over the city and commit crimes...on stilts! Recently he reformed, deciding to be a hero instead, and tried to fight crime...on stilts. Unfortunately, Wilbur Day proved to be just as much of a joke as a hero as he was as a villain. Trying to arrest a criminal who was already in government custody, Stilt-Man also made the fatal mistake of blundering into one of the Punisher's operations. Annoyed at having his cover blown and tired of having his time wasted, the Punisher shot Stilt-Man in the groin. With a bazooka. Sure, he may have been a joke, but nobody deserves to go that way...

JACK O'LANTERN

Killed in Civil War #5

Despite Jack O'Lantern's demonic appearance, there was nothing supernatural at all about him. Steve Levins was a mercenary through and through, and when the Thunderbolts gig came along he eagerly embraced it. Sure, they infused him with electroshock nanites, but when his year of service was up, he'd get amnesty and a big payoff. And all he had to do was hunt down heroes like Spider-Man. Sweet gig, right? Wrong – because on his first Thunderbolts mission, Jack ran afoul of the Punisher, who shot him right in the head. It looks like Jack O'Lantern's war profiteering has come to an abrupt end...unless something truly supernatural does happen...

JESTER

Killed in Civil War #5

For Jody Putt, the newest Jester, this was the opportunity of a lifetime. The Thunderbolts! A chance to emerge from his predecessor's shadow, and show the super-human community that he was a force to be reckoned with! And he almost did it, too. On his very first Thunderbolts assignment, the Jester's toys helped defeat Spider-Man – an impressive achievement, and one that surely would have gained him some long-anticipated respect – if not for the presence of the Punisher. Sneaking up on the battle scene, the Punisher calmly shot the Jester in the head – ending his major-league career before it even got started.

GENERAL DEMETRIUS LAZER

Killed in Civil War: X-Men #4

When will the government learn? You don't put a mutant-hating bigot in charge of a benevolent mutant-policing program. General Demetrius Lazer started out merely gruff towards mutants when he was put in charge of Sentinel Squad O*N*E, but after repeated humiliations by the X-Men and their enemies, he degenerated into outright villainy. When the mutants being "kept" at the Xavier Institute escaped, Lazer tried to kill them all – using the treacherous mutant Johnny Dee and his voodoo-like powers to manipulate them, and locking them inside a weapons bunker rigged to explode. The mutants were eventually freed – and granted amnesty by the President, to boot – but the final act was poetic justice, as Johnny Dee turned on Lazer, snapping his neck from afar.

HAROLD "HAPPY" HOGAN

Killed in Iron Man vol. 4 #14

Of all the deaths in the Civil War, none is more coldly ironic than Happy Hogan's. One of the main concerns of the anti-registration movement was the fear that if heroes' identities were revealed to the authorities, they could be leaked to enemies – putting the heroes' friends and families at risk. Iron Man, disagreeing, unveiled his identity to the entire nation as a sign of good faith. And what happened? Iron Man's enemy, Spymaster, attacked Tony's longtime confidant Happy Hogan – and the ensuing battle left Happy brain-dead.

WALTER DECLUN

Killed in Wolverine vol. 3 #47

Walter Declun was the worst kind of war profiteer. He weaseled his way into becoming CEO of Damage Control – a company that cleaned up and rebuilt properties after super-human battles – and began surreptitiously providing super-villains with MGH, a drug that boosted their powers. The ensuing battles were larger, the destruction greater – and his pocketbook was fatter. No matter the cost to innocent bystanders. His scheme backfired on him, though, when his "client" Nitro caused the Stamford disaster that killed over 600 people, prompting Wolverine to do some investigating. Discovered, Declun tried to kill Wolverine, even taking some MGH himself – but it was no use. He got what he deserved. Wolverine didn't even blink when, shall we delicately say, he did what he does best to Declun.

SLYDE

Killed in Civil War: War Crimes

Slyde just couldn't catch a break. During his most recent stint in jail, his half-brother Matt took up the Slyde identity, and was killed twice for his trouble – once by Hydra and once by Wolverine. Grieving, Slyde enlisted in the Thunderbolts Army, but was given the boot when they were downsized. Returning to a life of crime, he was approached by Hammerhead, who tried to recruit him in a bid against the Kingpin. Slyde remained loyal to the big man – and had his loyalty repaid by being shot in the back of the head by Hammerhead's enforcer, Underworld. The final twist of bad luck? Underworld was a double agent, loyal to the Kingpin himself – and he only killed Slyde to maintain his cover. Some guys just have no luck at all.

HAMMERHEAD

Killed in Civil War: War Crimes

Hammerhead just couldn't leave well enough alone. Sprung from jail on a technicality, he could have laid low for a while – but instead, he immediately made a play for the Kingpin's turf. Bad move. The Kingpin manipulated Iron Man and his pro-registration forces into shutting down Hammerhead's little scheme, and to add insult to injury, Hammerhead was betrayed and shot in the head by the Kingpin's "inside man," Underworld. Is this the end of Hammerhead's long criminal career? Can a steel-reinforced skull survive an adamantium bullet? Only time will tell...

GOLDBUG

Killed in Civil War #6

Goldbug thought he could see the writing on the wall. The Superhuman Registration Act meant drastic changes in the way the super-human community operated, and Goldbug wanted out. After an attempt to obtain a false identity and leave the country turned out to be a bust set up by the Heroes for Hire, Goldbug decided to try the opposite tactic, and go further underground. He arranged a meeting with Captain America's underground team, and offered to join them – which is when the Punisher entered the room and, incensed at the thought of teaming up with villains, shot him dead. Poor Goldbug thought he could see what was coming – but there was no way he could have seen that...

PLUNDERER

Killed in Civil War #6

Why would a British nobleman care about the American super heroes' Civil War? As Lord Plunder, the villain known as the Plunderer was a British citizen – he could simply have returned to his home soil, bypassing the USA's Registration Act and their unpredictable superhero infighting completely. But for some reason, he decided to offer a hand to Captain America's rebel forces. Maybe he foresaw an eventual worldwide progression of the Act and wanted to nip it in the bud – maybe he was simply trying to turn over a new leaf – but whatever the reason, it was a fatal mistake. The Punisher, another of Cap's uneasy allies, overheard his offer of assistance – and, disgusted at the thought of working with villains, gunned the Plunderer down in cold blood.

TYPEFACE

Killed in Civil War: Front Line #10

For a minor-leaguer, Typeface was doing surprisingly well. He didn't have any powers of his own – just gimmicked-up weapons and explosives shaped like letters – but it was enough to let him defeat Spider-Man his first time out of the box. Unfortunately for him, it was also enough for the Superhuman Registration Act to apply to him. After being arrested for not registering, imprisoned in the Negative Zone, and finally sprung, he and some of his fellow escapees were hunted down by the Thunderbolts – and Typeface was violently thrown against a bus and killed. A sad end to a short career...and he was doing so well, too.

THE RESIDENTS OF STAMFORD, CT

Killed in Civil War #1

Although all the super-human lives lost during the Civil War are tragedies, it's important to remember the greatest tragedy of all – the deaths of 612 innocent civilians, including 60 schoolchildren, in Stamford, Connecticut. Grief motivated the survivors in many different ways – Miriam Sharpe, mother of schoolboy Damien Sharpe, marched on the White House, created a groundswell of public support, and lobbied successfully for the passing of the Superhuman Registration Act. James Stricker, father of a young girl killed in the blast, shot Speedball on the way to his trial. Iron Man created a beautiful garden as a tribute to the lost children, and dedicated himself to making the world a safer place. Namor, who lost a cousin, simply hunted down and dealt with the villain responsible. The Stamford tragedy touched everyone in the Marvel Universe...and how they deal with the fallout from these lost lives will continue to be seen and felt for months, perhaps years to come.

CIVIL WAR AFTERMATH

IRON MAN

WRITER: DANIEL AND CHARLIE KNAUF
ARTIST: ROBERTO DE LA TORRE

No player still standing in the drama of *Civil War* has taken more hits than Tony Stark. His reputation in tatters, his friendships in disarray, his integrity in question, and, indeed, his very soul seemingly hanging in the balance, never before has the man who donned the unstoppable suit of Iron Man armor been more vulnerable. It is a time when he mourns the death of two of his best friends – Happy Hogan and Steve Rogers – both victims in a tragedy that seems fated only in hindsight. Despite his bold new role as Director of SHIELD, it is a time in which it seems that just a little wind could blow him away. How can he possibly continue negotiating the treacherous terrain of a post-CW world in such a state?

Spotlight talked about this and other topics with series writers Daniel and Charlie Knauf, the father and son writing team who have picked up after Warren Ellis and Adi Granov's pivotal *Extremis* run *(Iron Man #1-6)*. We also got some fantastic, black and white, original artwork from new artist Roberto de la Torre to share with fans of Iron Man. So, without further ado, the aftermath of Iron Man revealed...

SPOTLIGHT: By the time this issue of *Spotlight* hits store shelves, you and Charlie will have seen nine of your *Iron Man* issues published and in the hands of comic fans. Can you help clarify a little bit what the challenge has been during this short stretch of time writing *Iron Man*? Coming on to the title, how much of "you're going to have this *Civil War* thing to deal with" was part of your mandate?

DANIEL: When we signed on for *Iron Man*, *Civil War* was just a twinkle in Joe's eye. We'd pitched a six-issue arc on the series that was CW-free. With the delays, though, our arc ended up overlapping the beginning of *CW*. Joe and Tom were very cool about it, insisting we finish "Execute Program" *(IM #7-12)*, then jump in when we could. It was tough, like trying to leap onto a moving car from a bridge. Our main concern at the point we dug in was that Iron Man's pro-registration stance hadn't really been articulated, and that he'd done a lot of sketchy stuff that was pretty despicable in dozens of issues between the CW titles. We only had two issues to explain and motivate those actions and rehabilitate IM in the eyes of the fans. No small order.

FATHER/SON SMACKDOWN: The paternal feelings Tony was building with Peter are one of the casualties of Marvel's *Civil War*. (Art from *Iron Man #14*.)

CHARLIE: Yes, I agree. The most challenging part was to try our best and catch up with the momentum of *Civil War*. Another difficult thing was the scope of this project. Any reader will tell you that an "event" book that ties that many titles together must be hard to plan, but until you're actually in the trenches dealing with a number of other writers' stories, criss-crossing time lines, continuity and a bunch of other problems, you have no idea how difficult it can be, especially for two guys new to the game.

SPOTLIGHT: Sort of a follow-up to the first question, how has the experience been of writing your first story arc with *Iron Man* (issues #7-12) and then the two *Civil War* issues (#13-14)? Everything you'd hoped it would be when signing on? Or has it been such a rush that it's now a blur in your collective memories?

CHARLIE: Writing comic books professionally has been a dream of mine for a very long time. When I signed on, however, I soon realized how intense this job is. Yes, it is challenging and we have spent many nights breaking story but I would not trade the experiences I have had with Dan for anything in the world. It is one of the most rewarding things I have ever done in my life on many levels.

DANIEL: In a successful collaboration, whether it's two writers or a room full on a television show, what you seek is one collective voice. I look at "Execute Program" as "learning issues." Charlie and I were finding that voice. Plus, I was getting reacquainted with the medium. You really can see the learning curve from one issue to the next. By the time we got to our Civil War issues, we'd found our footing and were beginning to push the outside of the envelope with structure and story density, something we're pushing even harder in our post-CW books.

SPOTLIGHT: *Iron Man* features a shared billing for writing between you and your son. Can you describe how those responsibilities are shared? Is one party more involved in plotting and the other more involved with dialogue? Or is there an equal split? Or do these roles change from issue to issue or arc to arc?

DANIEL: Charles does most of the heavy lifting in that he handles the first drafts. We break the story together, and rewrite together. As time's gone by, I find more of Charlie's stuff surviving that process unscathed.

CHARLIE: When you work as a team, you are always going to change things. Dan is a different writer than I am, therefore "Dan & Charlie The Team" are going read differently than either of us individually.

DANIEL: Talent is like I.Q. in that it's what you bring to the party. Either you can dance or you can't. The craft comes with time and practice. I've learned a lot of tricks and moves in the 20-odd years I've been writing, and Charlie's an apt protege. I find my mentor role diminishing with

each issue. Plus we both have veto power, and we both use it.

SPOTLIGHT: Now that we know what the arrangement is, are there any pitfalls that have popped up so far? Or has it been smooth sailing, better than you even expected? Any cool or funny anecdotes you can share about that facet of your collaboration?

DANIEL: I was scared. What if the kid sucked? How would I deal with that? Would it hurt our relationship as father and son? Thankfully, he's more than been keeping up his end. He's way better than I was at his age.

CHARLIE: I approached this project not as father and son but respectful partners. I understand that he has a huge leg up on me as far as experience in the craft of writing so I respect that and listen to him. But I know comics – the specifics of what's been done, what works, what doesn't – so I sort of have an advantage from that standpoint.

DANIEL: Charlie saved our butts on #14. Toward the end, Tony says something lousy, and Sue Storm slaps him. A few panels later, we had Sue say something even lousier, and I wrote (while Charles was on a bathroom break) that he slaps her. Dramatically it worked. It worked in the moment. But Charles looks at it and says, "Man, THAT is a line you CANNOT cross! You can't have him slapping around Sue Storm!" I'm saying, "Yeah, but it's not like she's a woman – she's a freakin' *meta*!!! Plus he's not wearing his armor." Well, he vetoed it, and I grumbled about it, but he was so right. I hate him for that.

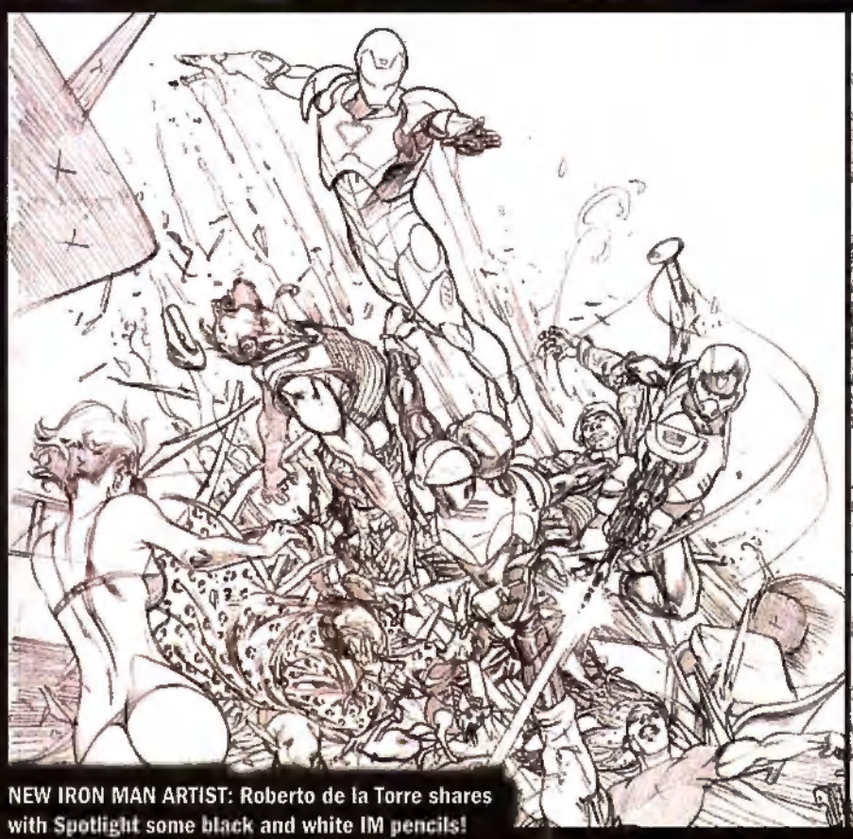
CHARLIE: With all the bad press IM had picked up, the last thing he needed at that point was to be physically abusing women. But the scene Dan wrote was very, emm...dramatic.

DANIEL: See? He's condescending, too! *(Laughter.)*

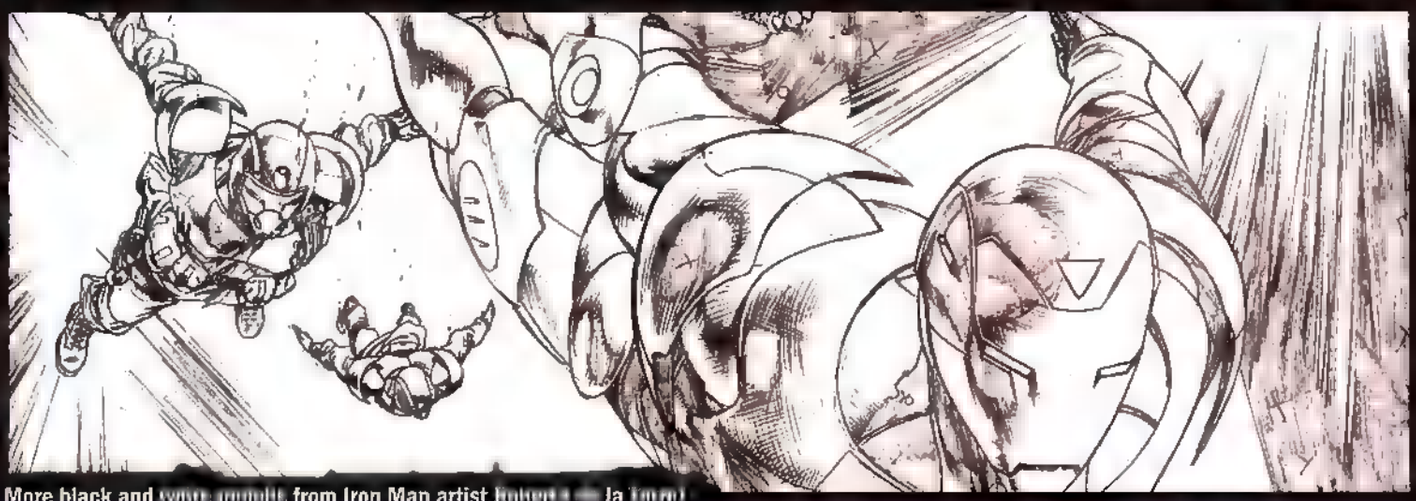
SPOTLIGHT: Turning to *Iron Man*, you picked up after Warren Ellis developed the character of Iron Man to include the new idea of Extremis, a bio-tech adaptation of Iron Man concepts that have been insinuated into the physiology of Tony Stark. Just in general, what do you make of this concept? Do you see this as possible, or likely, in our own world?

DANIEL: Superpowers are what they are, so "possible" and "likely" really don't enter into it. Our job is to work it realistically in the context of the human character that possesses the power – what does he do with it? How does it affect his life, his outlook, his behavior?

CHARLIE: Stan Lee was a visionary who truly believed in the balance of a character. The original Tony Stark was a super-genius with a debilitating handicap. So he creates this armor that keeps him alive, the side effect being all sorts of cool superpowers. He could save the world as Iron Man yet at any moment Tony Stark could die. The character continued to evolve over time, becoming even more powerful until his strengths outweighed his weaknesses. Then David Michelinie and Bob Layton with *Demon in a Bottle* restored the character by giving Tony a new crutch, alcoholism. It was perfect. Now more time has passed and Tony is more powerful than ever from Extremis. So we need to start exploring new problems in his life. How does Extremis affect Tony and the world? What's the downside to being almost godlike in knowledge? The realism is not in *how* things happen in Tony's world but in *what* happens and how he deals with it.



NEW IRON MAN ARTIST: Roberto de la Torre shares with Spotlight some black and white IM pencils!



More black and white pencils from Iron Man artist [illegible] la Torre

SPOTLIGHT: Returning the character of Tony Stark, being originally in nanodesk reality, what are your thoughts of growing Extremis into Stark's character moving forward? Do we going to see this as an essential asset to the book's character for a while, or do you think it's now a settled part of the narrative terrain of the book?

CHARLIE: Warren Ellis opened such a cool door for us. He kind of said, "Here ya go guys, now what?" Extremis is definitely seated into the Marvel U but we have yet to explore the full extent of what it does.

DANIEL: Extremis feeds solidly into the arcs we're working for the next 8 – 12 issues, so I'd say that's settled. I mean, sure, it eliminates all the old "armor hijacking" story lines, but those have been done. And done. And done. Plus I think Extremis is a great metaphor for the current human continuum. As a species, millions of lives are dependent on technology – whether it's shipping, transportation, high-yield crops, drugs, artificial organs, pacemakers...

SPOTLIGHT: What was your vision of Tony Stark and his characterization before you took the reins of the book and how has that vision possibly changed as a result of events in *Civil War* in general, and the *Iron Man* title in particular? Have you had to nuance certain goals you wanted to reach in order to better conform to CW reality?

DANIEL: We went in wanting to emphasize Stark's isolation – not just from other people, but other super heroes as well. What does that cost him? How does he struggle to overcome it? He's not a meta, nor is he a mutant. He's completely self-invented. Even Extremis is something he voluntarily subjected himself to – programming and directing its effects. Genius is a characteristic that isolates the individual, talent is another, wealth is yet another. Stark has all three. Every step he takes exacerbates that isolation – creating the armor, shooting himself up with extremis. Perfecting the "Iron" diminishes the "Man," and yet Stark can't help but continue on that road, despite the fact that it increases what must be agonizing loneliness. *CW* gave us a forum to continue to explore that. Who was the loneliest, most tragic president? Lincoln, of course. So of course that's the role is Stark drawn to in CW! It's looking Shakespearean!

CHARLIE: But our overall goal is to make *Iron Man* a great read, and CW opened more avenues for us to work with.

SPOTLIGHT: Sort of in line with the previous question, lay it out for us: what do you think of Tony Stark and his lead role in *Civil War*? Lots of writers and editors have had their say about the direction his character has taken, most notably JMS in *Amazing Spider-Man* and Mark Millar in the *Civil War* title, and how do you think his character has established itself in light of CW's conclusion? A richer, more complex and thus more interesting character to write? Or do you feel more like you're in triage, trying to find redemption for the character?

CHARLIE: It's unfortunate that most readers have seen Tony as a real bad guy in this whole thing. They've read *Civil War* and *Amazing Spider-Man* but they have to remember, they are not Tony's books. What we tried to do with our book was shape Tony into a richer character and in doing so we had to show the world why he did what he did. Redemption was a very important factor for us. We did try to explain what was going on in Tony's head but it's also important to remember that Tony is a complex private man that may feel the need to play his cards close to his chest.

DANIEL: The only regret I have is that some of the other writers sometimes played him a little too broadly, shining up their characters at his expense. But, again, if it's a Spider-Man book, your job is to write Spider-Man. Brubaker's gonna write Captain America. Stark is just a supporting character in those books. If he's a bit underwritten or weak in another title – even if he's a bit of a jerk – it's not the end of the world. They don't check with us. Nor should they. We didn't call JMS to ask permission to have IM clean up Yankee Stadium with Spidey. If anyone steps over the line, Tom Brevoort reels them in.

SPOTLIGHT: Some readers have already made up their minds about Tony Stark in regards to the latter question.

they don't like him! What are your impressions about fan reaction to Tony in our new Civil War reality? Are there any opinions you think resonate with you, and are there any that you feel very comfortable dismissing out of hand?

DANIEL: It's nice to see such passionate responses from the fans. I guess any press is good press.

CHARLIE: It's kind of weird seeing a book about the "villain of the year."

SPOTLIGHT: Looking at your two creative teams of Iron Man, there were a couple of major narrative turnings and his supporting cast. The most major, of course, is the death of his best friend, Happy Hogan. The last moment the two shared before Happy had that terrible low blow hit him was a very tender one, and certainly was an earnest representation of what Happy has meant to Tony all these years. I take it killing off Happy wasn't done lightly? What went into that decision, and how do you consider the long-term effects on Tony and Pepper's life playing out while you guys write the book?

DANIEL: When we took over from Warren, we just assumed we would run with the characters he created, Maya and Sal. We had no real plan in mind for Happy except to include him later on in a story. Then we were told by Tom Brevoort that they planned to kill Happy Hogan in CW. When Millar decided not to in the main title, we jumped all over it.

CHARLIE: All too often a supporting character in a comic book has kind of a lackluster death. The typical scene where the sidekick gets shot and the hero cradles the victim in his arms and yells, "NOOOOOO!" Then you move on to the next issue, completely ignoring the love so many people may have for the guy. We saw Happy as a real fixture in Tony's life, so we approached this very seriously. Happy is a hero, and if you really pay attention to what he says to Tony in issue 13, he single-handedly changed the course of Civil War. If he was going to die, we were damn sure to make it seem that the reader like it's going to affect Tony.

DANIEL: Hogan is one of painfully few people who can bring Stark to his own humanity. When Pepper approaches with his chance to remove him from life support, knowing that Tony, with his Extremis abilities, Stark can do so with no realistic chance of ever having had a hand in it, Stark says, "It's still murder." But Hogan is always over-lead, he's gone.

SPOTLIGHT: The other big moment for Tony and the closest he's come to hitting the bottle that I can recall in a long time. The drama inherent in that scene was maximized by Tony having an unknown drinker in Sue Storm (nice job on that scene!) What are your thoughts about Tony's alcoholism as it relates to that scene and the turns Tony's life has taken lately?

DANIEL: We wanted all those people that think of Stark as evil to understand the huge beating that he's taken in his principles on registration.

CHARLIE: It was hard because we only had two issues to do it in, but we figured with everything Tony's gone through, it's natural for him to have a relapse with addiction. At that moment he's in a darker place than he's been in for a long time.

SPOTLIGHT: You've been the writer of Iron Man all this time, but what do you think about Captain America? About the heart of his character, about what we've seen about him during Civil War, and how you think about [illegible]?

CHARLIE: [illegible] am [illegible] Captain America is not [illegible], but a character that makes us feel [illegible] in America. As Americans, we [illegible] all [illegible] to be strong, [illegible], tolerant and just. At the same time, I'm interested to see how the Marvel U handles the loss. It's a bold move.

GOODBYE, HAPPY: Pepper and Tony stand vigil over Happy Hogan. (Art from *Iron Man* #14.)

MORTAL ENEMY: The mounting weight of Civil War brings Tony Stark's biggest foe back to the fore in *Iron Man #14*.

DANIEL: [illegible] but as they say, nature abhors a vacuum.

SPOTLIGHT: Thanks for the foreseeable return on *Iron Man* is artist Rob de la Torre, who did such a [illegible] job on the first year of *Ms. Marvel*. Have you had a chance to check out his work on that title, and what do you think of the Ms. Marvel now that had a chance to see the work he's been turning in lately?

DANIEL: Charlie and I couldn't be happier with the images we have gotten so far. We're blown away. His style is perfect for the kind of book we're writing — very dynamic and yet grounded to reality.

CHARLIE: It's amazing and I know the fans will dig it. Rob is a true talent. And we're very excited about having him on board.

SPOTLIGHT: More generally, what kind of artist do you think *Civil War* needs? What are the best sets required to really nail the job?

CHARLIE: Since it's a very [illegible] story, there has we feel that the artist should be [illegible] or [illegible]. He or she should also have a handle on expressions. Reactions are important in this book. Luckily, Rob's got all of this in spades.

DANIEL: There's a grittiness to Rob's work. It's mean and beautiful. Gritty. Like really good Southern rock.

SPOTLIGHT: Obviously, after *Civil War* is finished (and particularly the events of *Captain America #25*), things will be drastically different for Tony, even more than they are now. What are your thoughts on these plot developments and how they'll play into your treatment of Tony in the pages of *Iron Man*?

DANIEL: Taking over SHIELD has rejuvenated Stark. Here we have a new challenge that he has never attempted before and Stark loves challenges. At the same time, you have to understand that in order to deal with problems Tony tends to keep himself up in his work. It's a fine line between healthy compartmentalization and denial. Also, it's a great way to scrape off some of the mud that got stuck to the bottom of his boots during CW.

CHARLIE: And he looks like a man in uniform.

Shame Charlie and Daniel know! Welcome new Iron Man *artist Rob de la Torre to the fold starting with* IRON MAN *#18 in April!*

CIVIL WAR AFTERMATH

MS. MARVEL

WRITER: BRIAN REED
ARTIST: AARON LOPRESTI

Carol Danvers has always been a woman who wanted to achieve high marks in life, whether as a member of the United States Air Force, as a card-carrying superhero, or a member of the Avengers. She's always wanted to be the best of the best. As any reader who has been following her story over the years knows, however, Carol has been faced with one adversity after another that has done more than merely pummel her self-esteem; the combined effects of her assault by Mariusz, getting mind-raped by Rogue, gaining and then losing tremendous super-human powers, and her troubles with alcoholism have taken a toll on her very identity.

And just when Carol seems to be asserting herself like never before, to find a place for in the world that can be uniquely her own, along comes *Civil War* to move the ground from under her feet in life-changing ways. An early and consistent supporter of the Registration Act (though not without uneasily muddling through the many moral dimensions of her pro-registration stance), Carol has come out the other end of *Civil War* seemingly intact. But as all Marvel loyalists know, it's the inner turmoil that hides behind the confident veneer of our favorite characters that produces the best stories. To discuss the future of Carol Danvers, *Spotlight* got together with writer Brian Reed and new artist Aaron Lopresti for the full scoop!

SPOTLIGHT: Was there much of a reassessment in your writing strategy for *Ms. Marvel* once you knew *Civil War* was coming down the pike? If so, is your plan for *Ms. Marvel* in the post-CW Marvel Universe substantively different from what it was when you signed on, and if so, how?

BRIAN: Oh, it's a completely different book now than it was going to be before. And I couldn't be happier about that. I've said before that the beauty of *Civil War* was that it was something the characters themselves didn't see coming, so all of their plans for their lives got thrown off the rails. The same thing happened to the creators of these books. You get a lot of ideas in your head, like, "Oh, I'm going to do this story and then this story," and you get in a groove and you're comfortable. Then, BAM! Something like this comes along and totally blows away everything you thought you knew. And that's great because that's what's happening to the characters, too, and that's what makes you able to get in their headspace and tell their stories.

SPOTLIGHT: When we think of the word "aftermath," our book's title is *Civil War*. Aftermath, rather, it suggests something like the image of dust settling after an explosive event. What was the key moment or series of moments in Carol's transition from the CW mindset you could point to and say is the key moment, the one on which her future development hinges, the one that forms her squarely inside her own personal aftermath?

BRIAN: The moment in that front yard in Connecticut when Julia Carpenter was [illegible] and Bucky out. Carol hauls back and the whole cop went down in a split second. Issues 13 and 14 are going to deal with some of the real-world fallout from that, but there's a lot more [illegible] looking to Ms. Marvel just below the surface — and it can all be traced back to that one event.

SPOTLIGHT: The dramatic thrust of *Civil War* was [illegible] well described by the tagline that preceded the event: "Which Side Are You On?" Ms. Marvel [illegible] to be one of the leaders on the front lines of the pro-registration war. As the cop who has to write her comrades-in-arms, did you struggle with how this decision fit into her values as a crusader? And how have her values changed since the war has reached its climax?

BRIAN: Carol chose to go pro-registration because of her values in the military and the Avengers and her unshakeable belief that proper training can keep people safe. I think to some in the heroic community that she didn't just wake up one morning and say, "Hey, I'm going to be pro-registration now." I wanted to see that she thought about it and she had her reasons — reasons much like many of us may imagine with Iraq — and that scene in the Marvel 65 where her mentor friends in Captain America's [illegible] of the Army is Carol's [illegible].

Unfortunately, I don't get to spend into her motivations and values during our Civil War lectures a lot of that stuff comes to the relevance of the war.

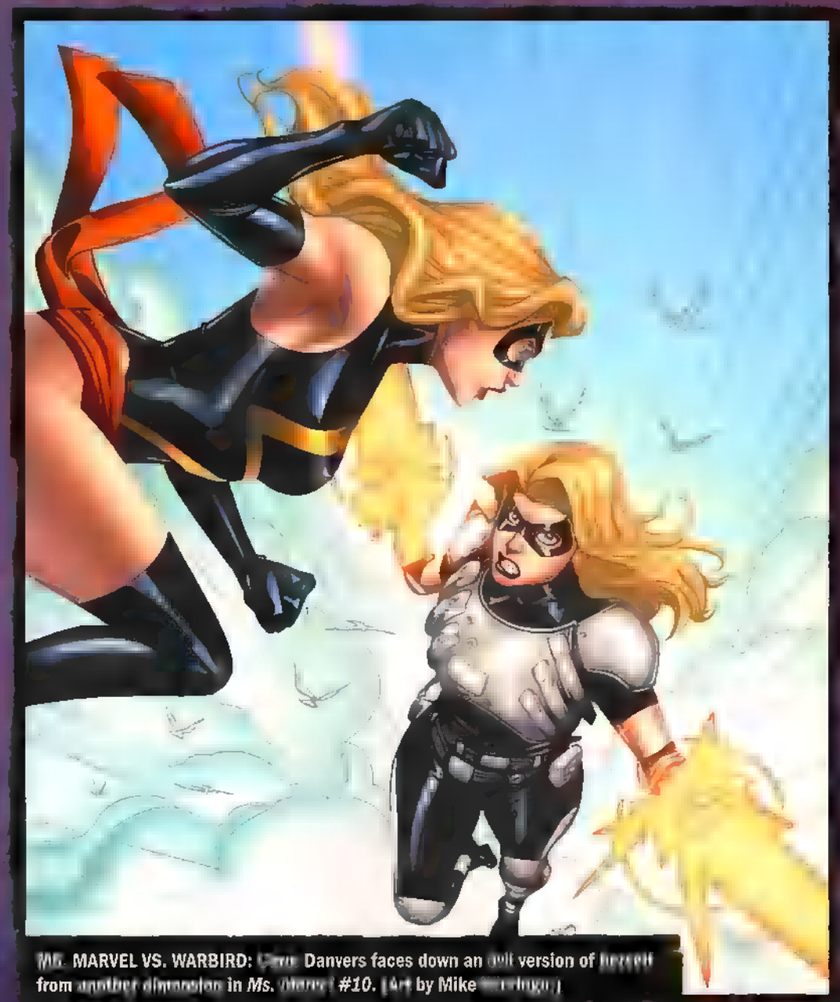
SPOTLIGHT: As a writer, you just have to see the character and write them in a realistic and sympathetic way, and sometimes you discover that you share the same values and have the same values as your [illegible]. So let's say you have Ms. Marvel [illegible] and all the different shades thrown at Carol Danvers — both in her own title and in the other CW titles — how would Brian Reed have handled them had he been in her boots?

BRIAN: Oh, I'm a total problem child when it comes to superhero figures. I probably would have gone on Carol's side in an instant if I were in Carol's boots.

However, knowing that a [illegible] fact, I don't think what we see Carol do was a lot of what I would have done in the same situation — such a choice stood by it and wondered if it was doing the right thing after the whole situation got out of control. I think it's the only human reaction in the situations she was placed in.

SPOTLIGHT: I don't think it's [illegible] to suggest that most of the [illegible] the Civil War [illegible] unpopularity. How do you [illegible] the [illegible] harsh fan reaction to Carol's choices? Is it harder than you expected to stand the right, [illegible] from some readers to her stance?

BRIAN: Frankly, I love the people who read the Civil War books and [illegible] Carol a hard time. Because right [illegible] the very [illegible] letter, I see [illegible] and [illegible] out the story Julia Carpenter was.

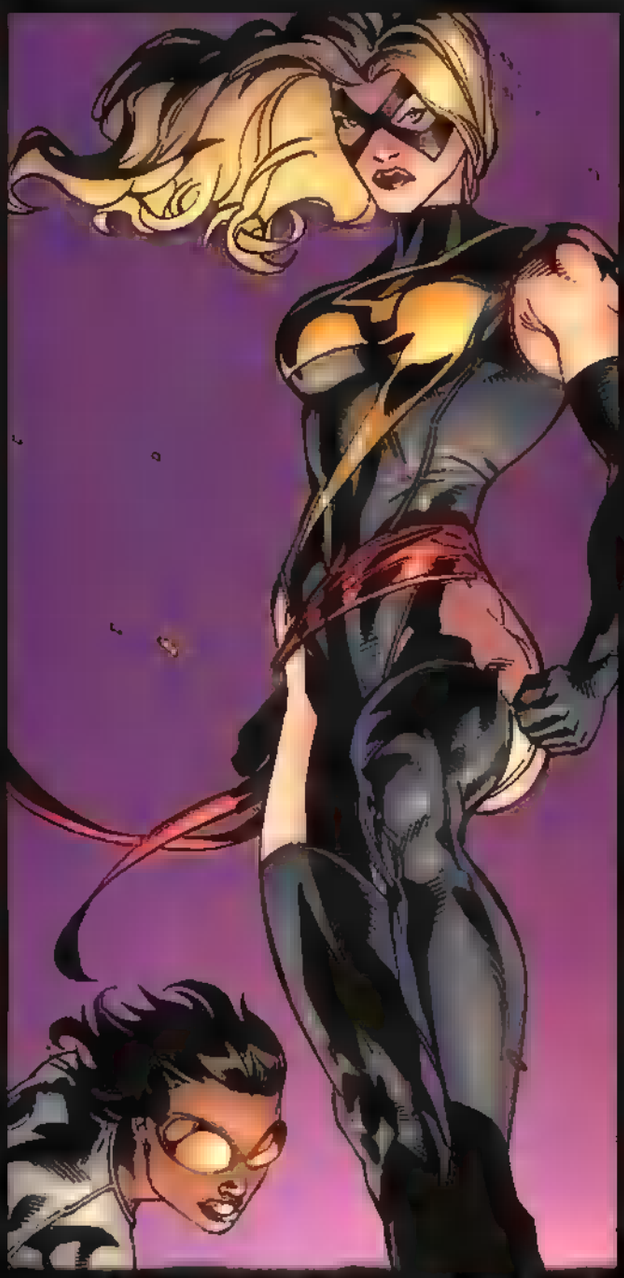


MS. MARVEL VS. WARBIRD: Carol Danvers faces down an evil version of herself from another dimension in *Ms. Marvel #10*. (Art by Mike [illegible].)

If we had been polite about Carol's choices, I'd worry I'd [illegible] something wrong. The story was about a woman who has made a decision that she thinks is right and wants to see that maybe the side effects of that decision are unintended. So I wanted people to be offended by her actions, or completely supportive of them. It was a tricky line to walk, but judging by the reaction I'd say I did it.

Of course, now I [illegible] a self-righteous [illegible] "Crich looks at me and the guy says I told," and I don't want to come off like that. I'm just saying that it would have been [illegible] to write a story where Carol did no wrong and even people who had a different view from the [illegible] could have come out smiling, like roses. But that would have been pretty easy and predictable, so I didn't do it.

SPOTLIGHT: You're [illegible] a very [illegible] for Carol. Her pro-registration stance has put her in proximity to Arana, a character that's had a mole going in getting



ARANA, SWEETKIN: The young super-heroine gets training from one of the best in future issues of Ms. Marvel! (Art by Roberto de la Torre from *Ms. Marvel #11.*)

established in the MU. Are we going to be seeing more of Araña in *Ms. Marvel*, and how do you feel about being given the challenge of giving such a character a little love and esteem?

BRIAN: Oh yeah. Araña has been this total surprise to me. I just wanted a character who was new and didn't have a lot of history behind them so I could slip them into the slot I had in the story for "hero to be trained." She just happened to fit the position and when I asked about her, nobody else was using her, so she got cast.

What ended up happening was that I completely fell in love with her. She's exactly what I needed in a character since she's young and reasonably naive not only in the ways of super-heroes, but also of adults. She got to say things the adults wouldn't or couldn't and she got to show us what someone completely new to the super-hero profession would think when given the choices at hand.

The side effect has been having this great underdog character and having her really click with Carol. I've written a few issues with her around since the *Civil War* and she's just proven to be a fantastic addition to the cast.

SPOTLIGHT: We've also seen Wonder Man in Carol's corner in the *Civil War* crossover [illegible] and a new [illegible] named William Wagner show up as a potential [illegible]. Are you [illegible] developing any relationships that might cause these two guys to feel any competition with each other? Both of them strike sparks with Carol?

BRIAN: There is a Carol Danvers, William Wagner/Wonder Man/Vision triangle in progress. We're going to see Carol in the [illegible] these two guys who could not be more different. One is an [illegible] billionaire handsome [illegible] guy, the other is a super-hero and a [illegible]. There's a lot of stuff planned out for these three and how Carol deals with it all.

SPOTLIGHT: Looking ahead to "Season Two" of *Ms. Marvel*, what are some of the things that are happening in the book that we haven't yet touched on that you want to highlight?

BRIAN: Starting in issue 13, we see Carol realize that just saying she wants to be the best of the best isn't enough. She made this proclamation back in issue 1 and she's been scrambling around ever since, not quite clear on what the next step should be. Issue 13 is that next step.

We also see how her joining the *Mighty Avengers* affects her day-to-day life. And, interestingly enough, we see that she doesn't initially want to join the *Mighty Avengers* at all. Issues 13 and 14, aside from dealing with Julia Carpenter/*Civil War Initial*, also focus on the cast Carol makes that gets her interested in the *Mighty Avengers*.

SPOTLIGHT: Speaking for yourself as a comics professional, what's the aftermath of Civil War like for you? Has it been a rush (in good ways or bad ways)? Are you feeling slightly crazed about how to react to the rapidly changing status quo, or are you enthusiastic and even more motivated than before CW? (Or maybe both?)

BRIAN: I'm so happy with *Civil War*. And that's not a company line. I actually really enjoy the effect it has had on the Marvel Universe and the effect it has had on me as a writer. It forced me to switch up my game plan wide stream, it forced me to become better in a lot of ways. And the choices I have opened in this next year are going to be huge and exciting.

THE ART OF MS. MARVEL
AARON LOPRESTI

SPOTLIGHT: How do you go with Carol Danvers as a character? Is she a character that you're extremely familiar with, or do you really only have a general sense

CW: TURNING POINT

"The events in that front yard in Oklahoma, when Julia Carpenter was captured and lashed out, Carol fought back and the whole day went down in a bad, bad way — that was the major turning point for her. *Ms. Marvel # 13-14* are going to deal with some of the most obvious fallout from that day, but there's a lot more nastiness lurking for Ms. Marvel just below the surface — and it can all be traced back to that one event." — **writer Brian Reed**

SPOTLIGHT: Do you find your [illegible] on the [illegible] is sort of an [illegible] as an artist, something that gets your juices going, or is it merely an extra layer of [illegible] to work through?

AARON: From the [illegible] of [illegible], it's a [illegible] you're [illegible] and saying, "Oh, I gotta find reference for this." I'm not a guy who [illegible] that because [illegible] I just like to go, and to have [illegible] and say, "Wait a minute, who's this character in the background? Oh, yeah, now I have to go find it." And to go through piles of paper to find the reference. Then to go on the internet to find more reference!

But on the other side of it, the *Ms. Marvel* title is [illegible] now, only a year old, and [illegible] after *Civil War* is [illegible] a new [illegible] because everything has [illegible]. So there is the excitement of that — we're [illegible] something here, and to be at the [illegible] level of that is always exciting, and [illegible] a lot more work because you're often [illegible] up stuff you weren't familiar with, or you're creating new stuff on top of just drawing the book.

SPOTLIGHT: What elements of the visual [illegible] to you as an artist? And are you going to [illegible] all with her costume?

AARON: It's funny you should mention that, [illegible] about the costume. Well, I'll answer your first question: any time you get to draw the [illegible] you can't help complain about it. The human [illegible] is the most fun part of drawing, at least for me. I'm not a big "[illegible] robots" kind of guy. I'm more organic, and that's why I loved all of Gil Kane's designs from DC and Marvel in the '60s and '70s, because they were [illegible] body units, so he was *always* drawing anatomy. In that regard, she doesn't have a bunch of shoulder pads and [illegible] stuff all over, you're drawing the figure, what I think is.

On the other hand, I have been [illegible] that part I haven't [illegible] to anybody [illegible] what [illegible] I don't think [illegible] has [illegible] that it as an [illegible] kind of [illegible] the other day. Maybe I could change [illegible], or maybe I could design [illegible] just kind of [illegible] with Bill Roseman [illegible] and see what [illegible] if there seems to be a logical [illegible] to it, [illegible].

SPOTLIGHT: So [illegible] in with the [illegible]?

AARON: Yeah. I'm [illegible]. I'm [illegible] and a [illegible] to be [illegible] some [illegible] if they are [illegible] to make the Top 10 of people's favorites list. (Laughter.) But they'll make the top 10 of [illegible].

SPOTLIGHT: Live stuff?

AARON: [illegible] M.O.D.O.K. [illegible] up. Are [illegible] a [illegible] there.

SPOTLIGHT: [illegible] the first [illegible] sitting legs and a [illegible] chair.

AARON: It [illegible] anything better than that. [illegible] be in the first story [illegible], and I've been [illegible] this to [illegible] in Marvel's the Long Titan. We'll see. That [illegible] is hilarious. If I keep [illegible] them [illegible] people [illegible] they'll go, "Alright, alright, we'll [illegible] him in [illegible]."

Cover by Brian Reed and Aaron Lopresti as MS. MARVEL enters "Secret War."

CIVIL WAR AFTERMATH

FANTASTIC FOUR

WRITER: DWAYNE MCDUFFIE
ARTIST: PAUL PELLETIER

[illegible] event [illegible] a superhero team, but when that team is also a family, the results can be devastating — and potentially irreparable. Well, in the aftermath of the *Civil War*, that's exactly what the *Fantastic Four*, Marvel's first family, are dealing with. As revealed at the end of *Fantastic Four #544*, the team has a new lineup, with the war's shocking events leading to the temporary (?) leave of absence of Reed and Sue Richards, as they try to salvage their marriage, the fate of which would surely stand of one of the war's greatest casualties, replacing them as marriage husband and wife team in the [illegible] Black Panther and Storm, the King and Queen of Wakanda, [illegible] the team's new status quo is [illegible] Cover of writer DWAYNE MCDUFFIE and penciller PAUL PELLETIER.

Dwayne McDuffie is a DC veteran in the comic book writing world. In his [illegible] years, he rebirth turned titles like *Damage Control*, *Deathlok* into cult faves, and has become known in recent years for his contribution to the *Justice League Unlimited* series. Dwayne recently returned to Marvel, making a splash with the miniseries *Beyond!*, an update on the *Secret Wars* mystery, featuring a swell cast of cosmic and time-spanning heroes, including *Deathlok*. Now he's set to guide the new *FF* through Civil War's aftermath. Dwayne took over the *FF* right in the middle of *Civil War*, with *FF #543*. The following issue (*FF #544*) also marked the book's 45th anniversary (what a time to celebrate its death!). Dwayne, anyway, launches a new storyline with the new *FF*.

Paul Pelletier has been working on his [illegible] for a while now, cutting his teeth by [illegible] in [illegible] work on team books like *GLA* and *Exiles* (the only team that explores more places than even the [illegible] with [illegible]), the last featuring the team's new direction and new lineup. Pelletier [illegible] his impressive pencil skills to the title that started it all. *Spotlight* spoke with Dwayne about taking the reins of The World's Greatest Comic Magazine during these turbulent times, and with Paul about the visual aspects of Marvel's First Family.

SPOTLIGHT: Dwayne, how did you come to return to Marvel after so long away?

DWAYNE: Tom Brevoort called me up. I've known him since he was an intern and I was assistant editor around 1990. He told me he had an idea for a comic and he started talking about the idea, it sounded cool and we bounced it around, and it ended up being *Beyond!*

SPOTLIGHT: *Beyond!* followed on some aspects of *Secret Wars*, arguably Marvel's first big event, from back in the eighties. When you were working on *Beyond!*, the Marvel heroes were in a different kind of war, and your book was off to the side — a self-contained little mystery. Were you aware of what was happening in the Marvel Universe at the time?

DWAYNE: Tom kept me filled in. One of the things that happened, that maybe I could have done a better job on, was that a lot of people seemed to think that this wasn't in continuity, or not in the Marvel Universe, and it was. I'm going to pick up on some stuff in *Fantastic Four* and maybe people will say, "Hey, that really happened!"

SPOTLIGHT: One of the stars of *Beyond!* was Gravity, a cosmic young hero Marvel recently introduced (in the [illegible]

Gravity: Big City Super Hero). The final page of *Beyond! (SPOILER ALERT!)*, showing Gravity's tombstone, featured the Watcher saying that this was not the end of Gravity's story. I take it this is something you'll be picking up on?

DWAYNE: I'm definitely going to pick up on Gravity. Actually, Gravity's death was editorially mandated. That was decided before we even had the entire team picked. There was another plan for Gravity that didn't work out. I got to the last scene and I was getting ready to kill him and I thought, "I can't kill this guy!" but I had to pull the trigger. He's a great character. I really, really love the character.

SPOTLIGHT: You're taking over the *Fantastic Four* when the lineup has been altered, with Reed and Sue gone.

DWAYNE: I do want to stress that all of the original members of the Fantastic Four will continue to appear in the book; they're just not all on the team.

the anniversary issue (*FF #583*) is she hangs out with Johnny babysitting the kids after Fantastic Four Appreciation Day, knowing that Reed and Sue are having a big conversation about what's going to happen to the team and wondering if they're coming back, or if they're both coming back. Ben and Johnny are watching a documentary, and sort of Mystery Science Theatre 3000 ing it.

SPOTLIGHT: So Reed and Sue are trying to reconcile? What is their state of mind?

DWAYNE: It's a really, really tough situation. By this point I've revealed Reed's reasoning, and I'm sort of with Sue on this. I understand what Reed did but I think he didn't trust his family enough. He's doing things behind their back and lying about the reasons he's doing things. After Sue finds out she feels a little bit softer toward him because she can't disagree with his goals, but she really disagrees with how he came to that. It causes a lot of tension in the group and certainly a lot of tension in the marriage. What they decide to do is to go off to spend some time together and try to reconnect, as they leave for Titan to work through their issues, leaving Ben and Johnny behind. They're both not entirely sure about the team anymore. But fundamentally, the FF is a family, a family of explorers and who's on the team doesn't affect who's in the family.

Black Panther and Storm will have their hands full dealing with Jemma/Recreated Djinks, in both the pages of *FF* and *Black Panther* (Cover art to *Black Panther #26* by Nikos Hatzonikolis.)

SPOTLIGHT: And how do Black Panther and Storm become their antagonists on the team?

DWAYNE: Storm and "Clor" (the Thor clone created by the evil brain trust) have a fight at the Wakandan Embassy in New York. The Embassy is completely destroyed. The Panther has decided that he needs to stay in New York and work politically against the Registration Act, not on moral reasons but for military reasons. He feels like the United States has a superhuman army and that they control all of their superhuman resources, which makes them even more dangerous. Not only are they the only world super power, they also have an army of things, any one of which is worth a thousand soldiers. So the Panther is trying to work through the U.N. with other countries to put pressure on the U.S. to agree to not use their resources in a military manner. The U.S. is not even acknowledging that they are using them in this manner or have any intention of doing so.

So Reed and Sue offer T'Challa the use of the Baxter Building, which becomes the temporary Wakandan Embassy. So the Panther, Storm, and Zuri — which is the source of some [illegible] — are living in the Baxter Building temporarily while they do business in New York. Unfortunately, when you live in the Baxter Building a lot of other stuff comes up. So they end up teaming up with Ben and Johnny on some [illegible] cosmic stuff. I think the F have been sitting around in their apartment for a little too long. Because of the [illegible] of the *Civil War*, they've been in New York and they've been in the Baxter Building for a long time, and to me the FF [illegible] sound going somewhere.

SPOTLIGHT: Agreed! Where will they be going, you ask?

DWAYNE: They're going to the Watcher's home on the moon as well as the Encyclopedia Universum, which is where all of the Watchers keep all of the knowledge they have gathered. They're going to meet Epoch, they're going to meet the Silver Surfer, and generally where the Silver Surfer is, there's another big guy who tends to be right behind him. There's going to be a series of misadventures with a Jack Kirby creation called King Solomon's Frog.

SPOTLIGHT: Ah! From Kirby's 70's *Black Panther* run!

DWAYNE: Yes. Actually, it's King Solomon's *other* frog, which has dimension-hopping properties and they're going to hop into several parallel dimensions. One of the most fun adventures will be in Reggie Hudlin's *Black Panther* book.

SPOTLIGHT: So are you crossing over with the *Black Panther* series, or are you just having a status quo?

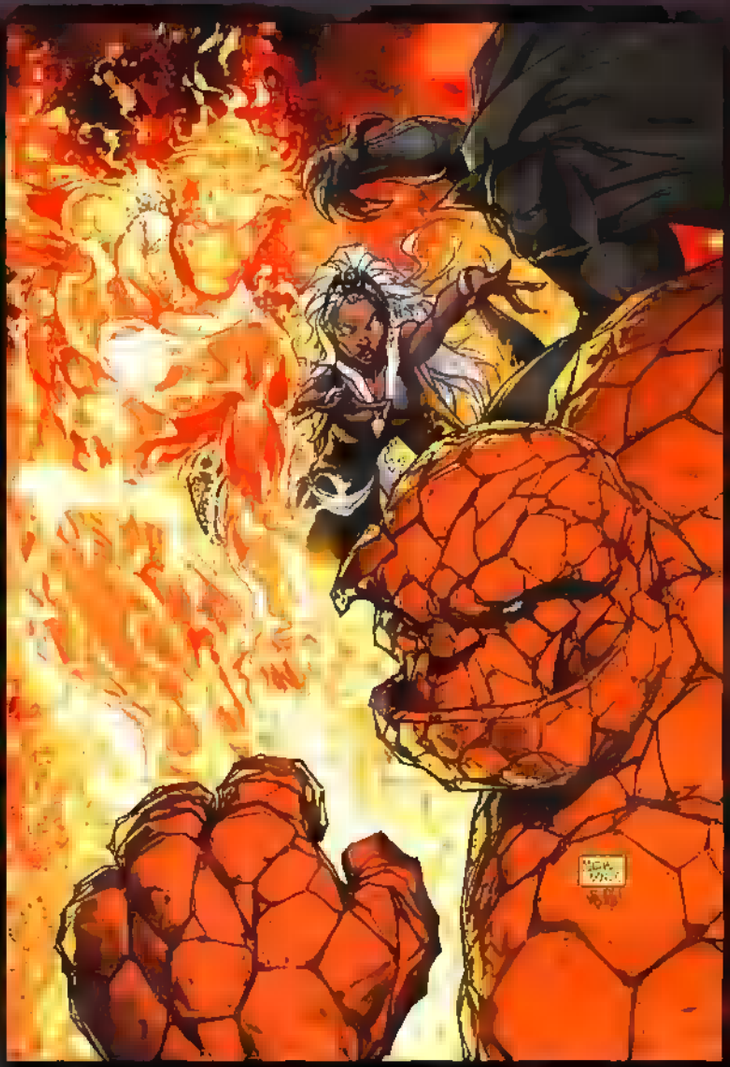
DWAYNE: We're having a status quo with the *Black Panther* book. There won't be any stories where part one is in *FF* and part two is in *BP*. But in each of our books, there are some works the other guy's story can go. If you just like *FF*, you can just read *FF*, and if you just like *BP*, you can just read *BP*. If you read both, you'll get a bigger picture story.

SPOTLIGHT: Although Reed is in a direct by [illegible] T'Challa is a bit of a multi-talented genius as well. He must love being around all of Reed's stuff.

DWAYNE: The Black Panther enjoys a lot of the tech. He's a really smart guy and in fact he's kept in touch over the years and use of a lot of the tech in the Galactic story.

SPOTLIGHT: When did you realize that Reed and Sue and Storm? As an African-American, does the Black adventure in a book like the FF mean something special to you?

DWAYNE: Not really. I've written both of the characters before and I enjoy writing them. I think it's really cool to rely the Kirby concepts and sort of bring the Black Panther home to where he started. I think having Storm in the mix adds a lot of flavor. It's very cool to see an adult, married, married loving couple other than Reed and Sue in the Marvel Universe, so it's a lot of fun from that point of view.



Covers to *Fantastic Four* [illegible] and [illegible] by Michael Turner.

Art by [illegible]

"In *FF* #542, there's a moment where Reed asks the Mad Thinker to 'check his math' for him. They're going through these complex sets of formulas where Reed's trying to predict the outcome of all the various things that are going on. Reed has this long conversation with the Mad Thinker unaware that Sue's in the room invisibly. Once she knows what he's really doing it completely changes the direction of the team and the family in ways where they can't go back." —writer Dwayne McDuffie

THE ART OF THE *FF*

PAUL PELLETIER

SPOTLIGHT: *Fantastic Four* is a flagship title not just for Marvel, but for comic books in general. How does it feel to be the one bringing the team to life visually?

PAUL: It's pretty darned exciting, if you ask me! Dwayne McDuffie is writing some great material that reminds me of some of the classic FF stories I read growing up, and who wouldn't want to draw those kinds of comics?

SPOTLIGHT: And now does it feel to take the plunge, and have it feature the different lineup?

PAUL: Honestly, Black Panther and Storm are great characters, and we still have Thing and Torch. Yeah, it would be cool to work on the "classic" line-up, but it's also exciting to work on a team you don't normally see. It's kind of neat to know that I'm working on a unique part of the Fantastic Four mythos. Who knows, maybe in the future, fans will look back and think that this version of the FF was really fun to read.

SPOTLIGHT: In Editor, you showed the power of the [illegible] comic books, but to handle (and well!) books that [illegible] very different places at a breakneck pace, a change of the [illegible] through the years. How did you deal with this challenge?

PAUL: Thanks for the compliment! Working that way in the business for 15+ years allowed me the chance to draw a variety of types of comics. Also, a lot of those years were spent doing fill-in issues for different series where I would be asked to do quick jobs at different characters and scenarios at a short notice. I've never specifically looked to draw team books, it just seems to work out that way. I guess it might not be the easiest for me if I had to draw the same location and characters all the time. You know what they say about variety: "It's the spice of life!"

SPOTLIGHT: What's it been like combining two iconic locations of the Marvel Universe, the Baxter Building, and Wakanda (yes the BB becoming a Wakandan Embassy)?

PAUL: It's kinda like that album Pat Boone did several years ago of heavy metal songs: It's a little strange, unnerving and sometimes makes you laugh, but in the end, it somehow works just fine!

SPOTLIGHT: When a new artist takes over *FF*, the first thing everybody wants to see is, "How does he draw the Thing?" and that first impression seems so important. How did you develop your approach to Ben Grimm?

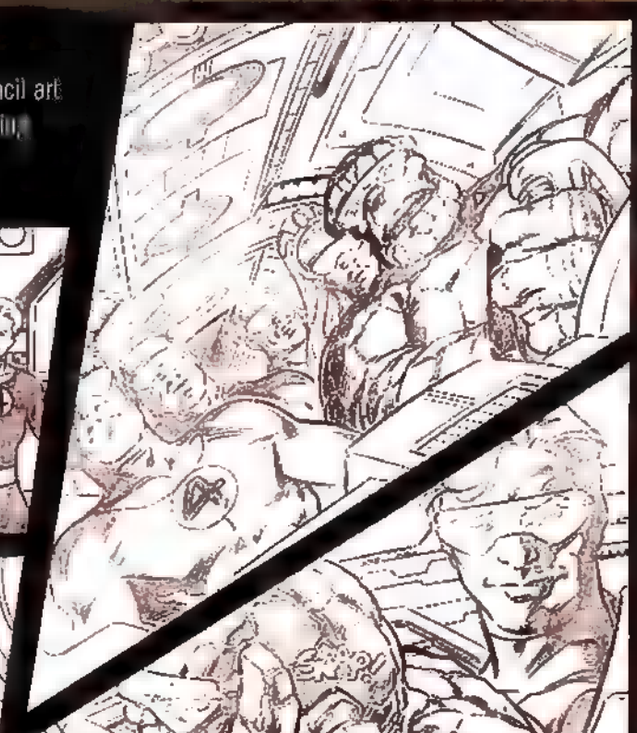
PAUL: The Thing is a great character, and it surprised me that he was tougher to draw than I thought he would be. Yeah, he's got the trademark characteristics (rocky-skin, jutting stony brow, button nose, etc.) but if something is a little off, he looks strange. It's hard to capture the feel that artists like John [illegible] Carlos Pacheco and Alan Davis did with the Thing. I guess the fans will let me know if he looks OK or not! Regardless, I'm having a hell of a time drawing him.

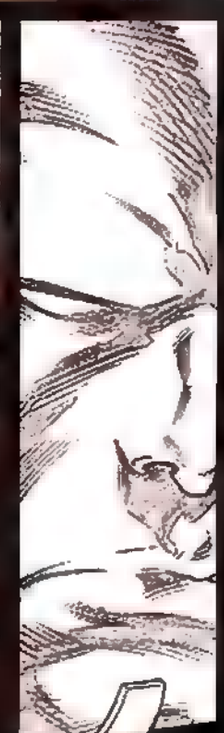
SPOTLIGHT: In *Exiles*, you and the team were off in your own world(s), but now, on *FF*, you're in the middle of everything! What's it like to step into the aftermath of the *Civil War*?

PAUL: Hey, it's *Fantastic Four*! I'm working with a great writer on a great story with very cool characters! At a comic's professional, that's all that really matters to me. I'll let the fans react to the *Civil War* aftermath.

Sounds good! Paul and Deadpool! Thanks so much and we [illegible] to see where [illegible] the dust settles.

Below are some examples of black and white pencil art by new FF artist Paul Pelletier, taken from upcoming issues of *Fantastic Four*.





CIVIL WAR AFTERMATH

BLACK PANTHER

WRITER: REGINALD HUDLIN
ARTIST: FRANCIS PORTELLA

"Just when I [illegible] pull me [illegible] words that [illegible] the Black Panther as he slips into his dressy new [illegible] in the aftermath of the *Civil War*. After all, the marriage with his new bride Storm was supposed to be their coming out party to the world as Wakanda's new power couple, and the resultant "world tour" with world leaders in Europe, America, Latveria and Atlantis was to seal the deal. Did other Street of Black Panther know that, by plan, they had to fulfill their royal duties as Wakandans would be marry's with their obligations to help upon a [illegible] world [illegible] in America — and one of those obligations would be [illegible] *Fantastic Four*?

Newsfight talked about the dynamic [illegible] the Black Panther and his [illegible] with writer Reginald Hudlin [illegible] third year of work on the [illegible]

SPOTLIGHT: How much did you [illegible] strategy for Black Panther [illegible] once you knew Civil War was coming [illegible] Is your plan for Black Panther in the post-CW Marvel Universe substantially different from what it was when you started [illegible] two years ago?

REGINALD: Actually, CIVIL WAR fit perfectly into my plans for Panther. It accelerated and amplified certain trends, which was a good thing. My plan was always to have Panther [illegible] a major player in the MU and to develop by [illegible] international resistance to the SHIELD [illegible] and the IT by his leadership to that naturally.

SPOTLIGHT: The wedding of Black Panther and Storm was a [illegible] event in Marvel culture, and in fact, it appears that that wedding is the last time some of the combatants of the Civil War will be in the same room (at least for some time). Before we dip into the events of Civil War, let's look back at the wedding from a creative standpoint: are you satisfied with how it played out, in terms of both the elements you brought to the story and the way the book wound up turning out? And how about that wedding gown?

WORLD TOUR: DOOM: Black Panther and Storm receive — and reject — an offer from Doom to make alliance in *Black Panther* #10.

REGINALD: My only regret about the wedding was that I needed another issue! There were so many great characters at there at such an important time in history, I wanted to play out a lot more side conversations between different characters who you may have never seen in a room together. I could have had at least a page of Storm fussing at that hot dress as she chatted with T'Challa.

That said, Storm's guardsperson from both sides perceptively was a big moment. Panther's father attempt to make a scene between Jan Man and Luke was fun, and Xavier telling Storm she is the now the highest profile mutant in the world — all of those are moments that will pay out over the next year or so. (More information on one of the biggest moments — the appearance of the Watcher at the Wedding — will be explained in an upcoming issue of the *Fantastic Four*.)

SPOTLIGHT: Here's one thing I've been wondering: was Reginald Hudlin on T'Challa and Storm's guest list? If you were honored with an invite, can you give us any idea on logistics for celebrity stuff we normal folk missed out on?

REGINALD: As the President of Entertainment of the world's biggest black media company, of course I would insure that BET would give complete coverage of the nuptials.

What did you think? Well there was that one time when The Fixer took an early flight across Wakanda after she crossed flight paths with the Angel who was doing the same thing in the other direction, and that whole bonding moment between Luke Cage and Jessica Drew, the first Captain America. Wasn't you to set up a couple hottie at the reception, but I won't say who.

SPOTLIGHT: My favorite moment, besides the actual nuptials, was the moment between Spider-Man and Man-Ape. Was that an echo of a moment from a scene you wrote in *Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man* #2? Was that a scene you were holding in your back pocket [illegible] time?

REGINALD: [illegible] I'm just never man able [illegible] the [illegible] — [illegible] in [illegible] knew I had [illegible] and I knew [illegible] awkwardness. I wrote [illegible] and send up the expectation. And who better to make fun of him than the man with the lowest self-esteem and the best self?

SPOTLIGHT: One of the big developments coming in Spider-Man circles is how an reality of marriage between Peter Parker and Mary Jane is, in some readers' minds, [illegible] the "everyman" status that made Peter Parker unique in the first place. Certainly, neither Black Panther or Storm are as popular as Spider-Man, but their fans still have expectations, convenience their characterizations. What are your thoughts on how the marriage between Storm and BP will enhance their characters, and do you have any concerns that the marriage could potentially derail their characters?

REGINALD: As much as Peter Parker/Spider-Man represents the everyman, T'Challa/the Black Panther and Storm represent ideals. They make a great couple, and that many fans have been waiting to see them together for decades.

Both of them are natural leaders with strong, more centers. There's an adjustment period in any new marriage during which a couple figures out how they are going to operate as a team. It's not just a matter of who's the boss — the King or the Goddess. It's two human beings, hanging out the best in each other through affection, understanding, devotion and the occasional kick-butting challenge.

SPOTLIGHT: A scene in *Black Panther* #10 shows T'Challa or akor a wry aside to Doom about how, if the pair's homecoming power is perceived as too much of a threat by foreign leaders while on their "world tour," they'd have to "take over the world." Is that notion that T'Challa was cracking wise about going to be a subtle underpinning of how they do business in the future, or using the kind of "power cosmic" they're fully aware that they possess?

MARVEL ZOMBIES ARE BACK! The [illegible] Arthur [illegible] cover to *Black Panther* [illegible]

"The pivotal moment for Panther and Storm happened at the bottom of the ocean when Namor convinces them to spearhead the international alliance against registration (in BP #21). At that moment T'Challa breaks with centuries of Wakandan policy to take a stand. He can justify it politically and morally but the aftereffects will be profound for both of them." —writer Reginald Hudlin

REGINALD: I think the first test of their newfound power capital was their taking a stand on Civil War. That act has repercussions which will cause them to invest even more heavily in bolstering their "power" leverage, which requires them to examine the roots of their abilities, both biological and spiritual.

Ultimately, they have to figure out how to balance "the greatest good" with "absolute power corrupts absolutely."

SPOTLIGHT: The first official *Civil War* crossover issue, *BP #23*, showed Black Panther and Storm leveraging their influence in a big way. They've chosen a side and are taking some proactive measures to help that side win. What events helped you connect the dots between T'Challa's initial stance of neutrality (in both *Illuminati Special* & *Civil War #3*) and this new stance?

REGINALD: I think the murder of Bill Foster, aka Goliath, was proof that whatever the intentions of the SHRA were, the execution of the idea was going horribly wrong. The SHRA creates a very real super-hero arms race and if they would kill one of their close friends (even inadvertently) then what would they do to the rest of the world?

SPOTLIGHT: Is writing politics into a mainstream superhero comic, even in subtext, a nerve-wracking experience for you? Are you ever concerned that readers will think that you are writing the characters to reflect your own personal opinions and thus alienating them if they are faced with issues in drama they may disagree with? If so, how do you reckon with all that and still produce a comic that deals with international intrigue and swashbuckling, adversarial action?

REGINALD: I think that is one of the beautiful things about the Marvel Universe. It has always been grounded in the real world, not made up Metropolises. Stan Lee revolutionized comics by introducing real-life problems into the lives of characters, whether they were psychological, spiritual or political. I think that's why Civil War has been such a great success. It takes real world anxieties and plays them out on a grander scale.

As for writing about issues and issue-oriented stories, it's actually great fun. I really enjoyed writing the debate between characters about the SHRA. When I wrote the dialogue for pro-registration characters like Captain Britain or Jim Rhodes, I only used arguments that I could agree with. I really wanted to make a strong case for both sides.

New Black Panther artist Francis Portella's character sketches for T'Challa and Storm's Fantastic new teammates!

That doesn't mean I agree [illegible] a character say in my books. There are [illegible] guys [illegible] terrible things, and there are [illegible] that are [illegible] who's character say [illegible] can understand the [illegible] or [illegible] with that point of view. [illegible] with the [illegible] of the character, T'Challa's [illegible] not [illegible] a [illegible] the leader of a [illegible] technologically advanced [illegible] the character want [illegible] People who are not [illegible] the character [illegible] going to read it anyway.

SPOTLIGHT: How [illegible] cable television network, as well as whatever other writing projects/media ventures you've got going on, are still turn in thoughtful, [illegible] for a comic book, like you've been doing? What are you putting on your corn flakes in the morning that helps you achieve as much as you have? (You [illegible] want some?)

REGINALD: Well, I started this [illegible] work on a [illegible] and a new [illegible] I'm finishing. I'm [illegible] it in a hotel room before catching the first [illegible] back at [illegible] six hours or [illegible] right after [illegible]. The only way I can [illegible] all is [illegible] love what I do. I love writing, [illegible] and directing movies and TV shows. I love producing a network. And I love writing comics. I mean, I love [illegible] all you [illegible] I'm not getting any [illegible].

SPOTLIGHT: Now that we know that Black Panther and Storm are [illegible] members of the [illegible] will your run and the number of titles [illegible]?

REGINALD: [illegible] will be two separate titles, but [illegible] will [illegible] each Dwayne (Mahalia [illegible]) and [illegible] about an hour or so about each of our [illegible] for a Black Panther and Storm [illegible] and our [illegible] anything else [illegible].

SPOTLIGHT: Are [illegible] and [illegible] on the [illegible]?

REGINALD: [illegible] a [illegible] off [illegible].

SPOTLIGHT: [illegible] often [illegible] fans [illegible] the [illegible] and Human [illegible] in the [illegible]?

REGINALD: [illegible] a [illegible]. The first three [illegible] of the [illegible] all [illegible] them feature the [illegible]. It's [illegible] all [illegible].

[illegible] *in the* [illegible] *be* [illegible] *in* [illegible]

CIVIL WAR CEASEFIRE: Not even [illegible] dress [illegible] the [illegible] between [illegible] and Captain [illegible] *Black Panther #18.*)

CIVIL WAR AFTERMATH

THUNDERBOLTS

WRITER: WARREN ELLIS
ARTIST: MIKE DEODATO, JR.

Much time has passed since the early days of the Thunderbolts' existence, when the team was a collection of villains play-acting as world saviors in a post-Onslaught world that desperately needed heroes. The T'Bolts were the wicked Baron Zemo's ingeniously constructed Trojan Horse, designed to take over the world when it's leaders least suspected it, but the lure of public acceptance as heroism was too much for most of the villains to resist, and the center of Zemo's plot could not hold.

Crossing the threshold from bad to good has produced several classic storylines for T'Bolts fans. Since those early days as Zemo's pawns, the team has gained public acceptance, lost it, gained it again, and in the wake of Civil War, are in as precarious a situation as they have ever been. With the power dynamics of the Marvel Universe undergoing historic changes, old members have been scuttled from the team and new members have been brought on board, and the leadership of the team has been altered in unimaginable ways. But one thing about the T'Bolts remains the same: if anyone has to tell you they know what happens next — they're either lying, or they're as hally as Norman Osborn! Spotlight caught up with book editor Molly Lazer and new artist Mike Deodato, Jr. to go over the title that keeps them guessing, too!

SPOTLIGHT: T'Bolts fans have been waiting a long time for the return of Moonstone to the roster of the Thunderbolts. I'm sure it's been a source of discussion over the years among the writers and editors of the title about exactly how that would go down. Reading the denouement to *Thunderbolts #109* and Warren's first issue (*T'Bolts #110*), I can't imagine a better scenario for the duplicitous Karla Sofen to really hit the ground running than the situation presented by the post-CW status quo of the Thunderbolts team. What are your thoughts about this upcoming idea, and about Moonstone in general?

MOLLY: I agree completely! While she has been a "team" for quite some time now, Moonstone is not very good at being a nice person. She can be ruthless, and she is certainly manipulative. Putting her in charge of the third team of new (and some old) Thunderbolts is the perfect place for her. She is able to use her teammates to complete the Thunderbolts' missions in whatever way she sees fit and then is able to manipulate the media to make the team appear to be heroes. I like the idea of having Karla answer to Norman Osborn, as we'll see each of them try to outplay the other.

SPOTLIGHT: Looking at the current roster of the new team, Songbird and Moonstone have been known quantities for years, but unlike Moonstone, Songbird's arc over ten years of T'Bolts comics has established her as Fan Favorite. At Summary, T'Bolts fans have been rooting for her on as her character developed from the lovelorn [illegible] upon joining the team into an assertive and powerful hero for positive change. Being partnered Warren's [illegible] to her, [illegible]?!?!?!

MOLLY: And wait and see! Warren has plans for her. With her sudden promotion from team leader to [illegible] around by Moonstone, Mel is on many general emotionally. We'll see her try to assert herself within the group, but as for whether she'll succeed and win out in the end or just be smacked back down, well... that's right, just wait and see!

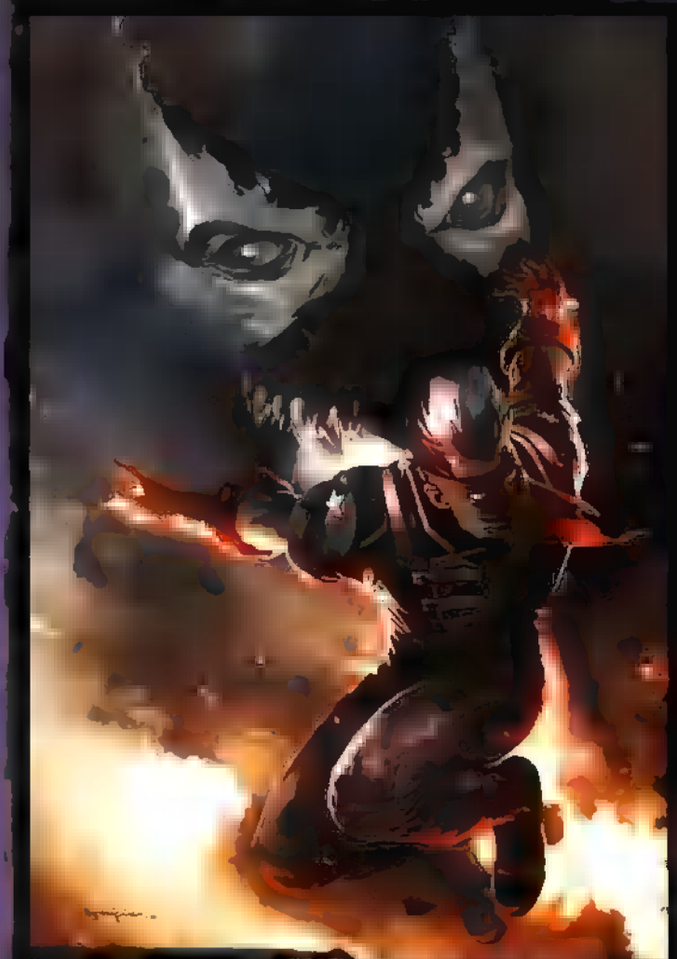
SPOTLIGHT: The four classic Thunderbolts on the current

team also include Swordsman and Radioactive Man. Why these four characters? What about them placed them in the larger list over other choices?

MOLLY: We presented a list of old Thunderbolts to Warren Ellis, complete with info about the characters and their quirks, and he picked the ones that seemed the most interesting to him. Each of the team members who were carried over from the old team has something slightly off about them (mount, mole, [illegible]). Which of the T-Bolts did Ellis find most interesting all about them? Graphical [illegible] Zemo, the team leader, Swordsman killed his sister while under mind control and now has stretched his skin around the hilt of his sword. Radioactive Man is a Chinese National working for the American government. Moonstone just came out of a coma and is an expert at getting people to do what she wants.

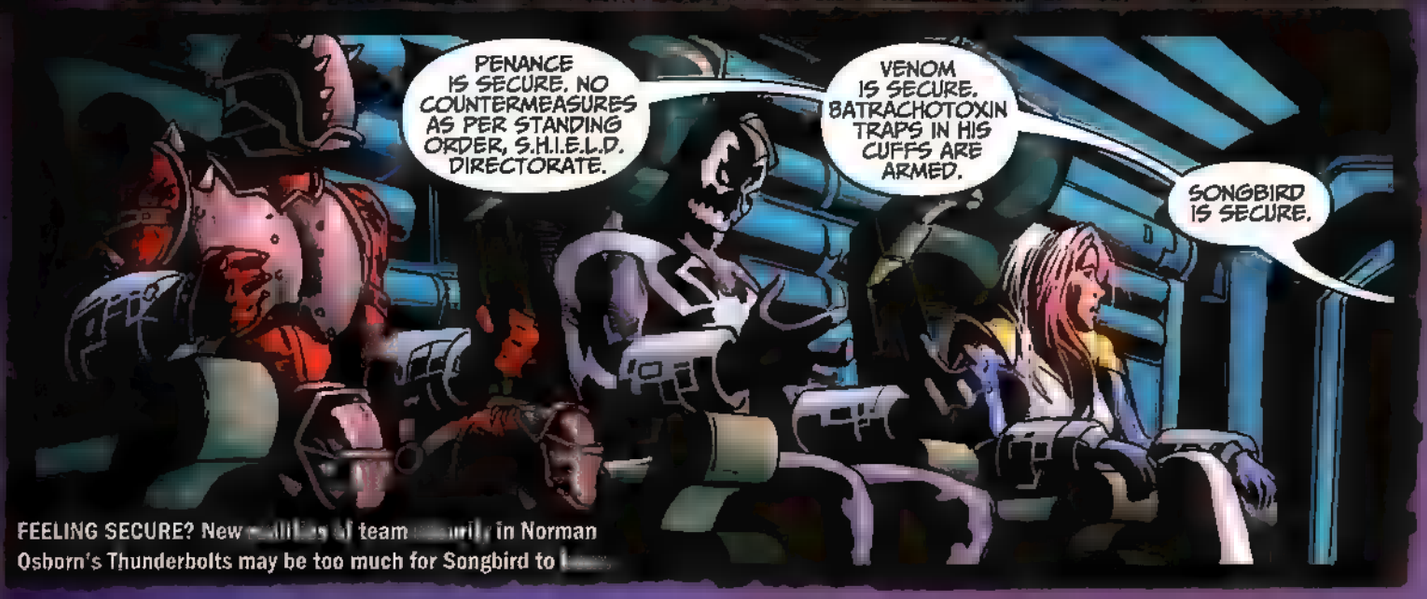
SPOTLIGHT: One of the most shocking moments of Thunderbolts #110 was the revelation that none other than Norman Osborn was in charge of assembling the Thunderbolts team. In my mind, this is even more controversial than the question of putting like Deathstroke and Venom to be tactically employed on T'Bolts missions: at least their behavior can be manipulated. To what extent is Norman Osborn a free agent as the master mastermind of the Thunderbolts' daily movements? And I assume that the method to the madness of Iron Patriot Osborn landed this gig — and who gave it to him — will cast a dark cloud over the proceedings?

MOLLY: Norman answers to the Commission on Superhuman Activities, so he isn't just working on his own. He is presented with a list of rogue superhumans for the Thunderbolts to take down, and then he makes the choice of the team's next target. Of course, no one who knows Norman well would put him in charge of anything, let alone a team of superhumans out to "do good," but people not as in the know about the goings-on in the superhuman community might not be as versed in Norman's background. There are powerful people who may have dealt with Norman in the business world and who may believe that Norman was falsely accused and be willing to give him a second chance. Whether that will



The cover to *Thunderbolts #111.*

THUNDERBOLTS ASSEMBLE: Songbird, Moonstone, Radioactive Man, Penance, Venom and Swordsman on their first mission. (*From T'Bolts #111.*)



FEELING SECURE? New [illegible] of team [illegible] in Norman Osborn's Thunderbolts may be too much for Songbird to [illegible]

pan out or not, we'll have to wait and see.

SPOTLIGHT: Now, about these bad guys — oh, I mean, about those new Thunderbolts members! Bullseye and Venom are two of the most dangerous and violent characters in the Marvel universe. We've seen in Thunderbolts #110 the extent to which Norman Osborn was willing to rein Bullseye down to size, and Moonstone is a formidable manipulator of her own. Can we presume that the woman bomb from controlling Venom and Bullseye's urges to do bad and the forces mounted against them to keep them from doing so will be one of the main issues of the book's drama going forward?

MOONSTONE: Character sketch by Mike Deodato Jr.

MOLLY: Absolutely. Both Bullseye and Venom are people who need to be reined in at times. Deceit, manipulation in their characterizations are there to the last degree.

SPOTLIGHT: One issue that jumped out at me was seeing Thunderbolts #110 was that it appeared that Songbird and her fellow Thunderbolts were being treated no better than Venom and Bullseye. They were all confined with restraints while they were put to the Raft/prison craft. Did Songbird and the [illegible] they were signing up for [illegible] like that [illegible] to be part of the new Thunderbolts [illegible]?

MOLLY: I don't think that Mel and everyone knew the specifics of what they were signing up for. They were asked to stay and work for the USA, but as Melissa said in issue #109, they're working for people who don't care a clue what makes them tick." Only time will tell how long the old T-Bolts will stand being treated that way.

SPOTLIGHT: A friend and I were discussing this plot point and we thought that it was Ramos' [illegible] way of telling readers about Mel's new [illegible] is that an accurate way to read that, or is there another explanation of why they were treated this way?

MOLLY: Yes, I'd say that's accurate. Mel's [illegible] when to go at the Hydra and when to hold back in [illegible] what he wants. He was [illegible] to bend Moonstone to his will! (We'll see how well that [illegible])

SPOTLIGHT: Warren Ellis is a futurist who [illegible] science, science, and [illegible] and [illegible], and I assume he's going to be given free reign to explore that in Thunderbolts. We've alluded of some very *new ideas in that* direction. What [illegible] the [illegible] and new arrival at the T-Bolts headquarters?

MOLLY: Definitely. The T-Bolts have a new headquarters base in Thunderbolts Mountain and a new aircraft — the Zeus. The team has the resources of the USA at their disposal, and the more designed their base is, the more

[illegible] that [illegible] and sold to the citizens of the Marvel Universe will [illegible]

SPOTLIGHT: Why was Gotham [illegible] as the [illegible] base of operations?

MILLER: The Dark[illegible] location gives the Thunderbolts [illegible] to the [illegible] Also, [illegible] the [illegible] like a good idea to me.

SPOTLIGHT: Of all the [illegible] in the Marvel Universe that have [illegible] the [illegible] as a result of it. It seems to me that a [illegible] could be made that [illegible] the [illegible] Are there [illegible] Warren that [illegible] the [illegible] hit of the [illegible] Marvel Universe?

MILLER: I sure hope so!

THE ART OF T'BOLTS: MIKE DEODATO, JR.

SPOTLIGHT: You're coming straight from a run on *New Avengers*, which is the biggest selling monthly book in the business, and you're running to a new title book that has made great strides in a lot of changes in the last few months. Can you give us some insight into how you are approaching this project, and what you feel you bring to it creatively, beyond simply drawing Warren's scripts?

MIKE: I bring to it an environment from a reader's point of view. Reading the scripts evoke a reaction of "Holy crap! I didn't see that coming!" So I try visually to bring that feeling to life as much as possible. Warren and I worked together on the *HOR "World Engine"* crossover prequelled in the *Wolverine*. Mike Deodato, Jr. [illegible] but the project kicks up to another level entirely.

Black and white, inked panels from *T'Bolts #113*.

SPOTLIGHT: You draw and ink your own art: how long does that take for you to do an average page? Does working on a team book with a big cast like Thunderbolts take longer on average than a book like *Amazing Spider-Man*?

MIKE: Theoretically? Yeah, it takes longer. A page of art takes me about 12 to 14 hours, depending upon the page. A wild scene with hordes of swarming villains might throw that off. I'm not as prolific as people think – I just work hard and hard.

Of course, during the time I was drawing *Amazing Spider-Man* there was a lot of [illegible] knockoffs, plus the real [illegible], plus all the usual Spidey supporting

RADIOACTIVE MAN: Character sketches by Mike Deodato, Jr.

cast, so much of that run was just like drawing a comic book, anyway. That's why I say, "Thoroughly."

SPOTLIGHT: In a book with as large and varied a cast as *Thunderbolts*, are there any characters that have already jumped out to you as ones you're going to really enjoy drawing?

MIKE: I get a kick out of drawing Fixer and Norman Osborn. The unimportant bad guys get some of the best scenes.

SPOTLIGHT: Radioactive Man has gone through a big costume change. Is that your design? If so, what thought process did you go through to come up with the new look?

MIKE: Marvel gave some comments about what they wanted to see. I established several designs based on Bryan's original idea, and Jay picked one. The process is a little more mysterious than that.

SPOTLIGHT: Penance is a new character being carried over directly from the events of *Civil War: Front Line*. What's your take on his character design, we didn't see much of him in *T'Bolts* #110, but he looks like he's going to have a big role in the title going forward?

MIKE: You want me to reveal still secrets?? I'm on the list. They'll come after me! They're still trying to get me to register! My drawing superpower is troublemaker a mortal to international security! (Laughter.)

SPOTLIGHT: Perhaps this is too subtle to have been planned, but the look on Songbird's face once she's slumped down in the Zeus, finding herself manacled next to Venom and Penance...it's heartbreaking. She looks completely lost and disoriented. Was that something you were going for?

MIKE: Of course. You need to understand, I'm doing my best NOT to make these characters heroic. I want everyone to be a living, breathing character on the page and under the mask. The more humanity (Hawkeye? Ronin?) I can specific character traits, the easier it is for the reader to become immersed in the story. I'm not here to show off. Everything I do on *Thunderbolts* is in service to Warren's story.

SPOTLIGHT: From the part that drawing tech stuff, like Warren's ultra-modern studios and gadgets? Is anyone you have to decide all that stuff? Is that a fun part of the job for you?

MIKE: Fun? It's hard work! But yeah, I'm drawing stuff that I'm not very familiar. I'm trying art for a whole state of drawing. Would go in a museum. Though that would be a nice book. And put me back on ad hoc schedule. (Laughter.)

SPOTLIGHT: How closely do you work with the colorist, Dylan Bergold? Was Dylan handpicked by you, and what do you think of his work in coloring your pencils and inks?

MIKE: Yes, I handpicked him. I picked Dylan because I work. (Someone misspelled his name on *Thunderbolts* #110, by the way.) He lives near the DC House Graphics Asia office in Manila, Philippines. I'm my locals, he's the best around, and he's receptive to all my coloring notes and ideas, and he "gets" what I'm trying to do. I want him to color practically all my stuff. I schedules allow.

SPOTLIGHT: Thanks, Mike!

MIKE: You're welcome! Can I go back to drawing now?

SPOTLIGHT: Sure, but do you first want to email Warren and suggest that he stop eat? (Laughter.)

THUNDERBOLTS by Warren Ellis and Mike Deodato, Jr. *is on sale now.*

TARGET: BULLSEYE: Norman Osborn puts the heat on the normally unflappable Bullseye. (*From T'Bolts #110.*)

CIVIL WAR AFTERMATH

SHE-HULK

WRITER: DAN SLOTT
ARTIST: RICK BURCHETT

We get to know what Dan Slott and Rick Burchett's undeniable chemistry for comics is in our *Aftermath: The Initiative* interview. Now Spotlight talks to him about the book that really put him on the map! In Dan's hands, *She-Hulk*, with its balance of superhero action and "superlaw firm" humor, has offered more fun than just about any other comic in the last few years. But in the aftermath of *Civil War*, even She-Hulk's bouncy attitude is sure to be challenged, as is the book's merry tone. With the assistance of veteran penciller Rick Burchett, we put Dan up to the challenge, but we consulting with him about the future of the title nonetheless!

SPOTLIGHT: While a many of the pro-registration heroes had some "dissent" moments that had fans [illegible] characters, [illegible] characters just went out as a voice of reason, not just for the [illegible] but [illegible] the war as a whole.

DAN: [illegible] *Civil War* [illegible]

SPOTLIGHT: [illegible] and [illegible] did we [illegible] words [illegible] as [illegible] on the [illegible]?

DAN: When Tom Brevoort first told me about *Civil War*, he told me it was going to be a very gray issue, that neither Iron Man's side nor Cap's side were going to be completely in the wrong or right. There wasn't gonna be a clear-cut hero or villain. It should be the readership that decides and pick really into it and divided. That doesn't seem to be the case. Everyone / Most people look at it and say "Yeah, Cap! Go, Iron Man!"

The way I see it is that as comic book readers we're aware of everyone's motives and see it from everyone's point of view. We see what's behind the masks, and it's a secret covenant that we the reader have with the characters. In real life, sure we want it to be [illegible] a [illegible] in the real world, if Iron Frog or Stupidtoad [illegible] was an [illegible] we want them in to the [illegible]. What gives them the right? If a uniformed "[illegible]" [illegible] started [illegible] had [illegible] him! [illegible] does not give you the right to be a first [illegible] Iron Man's [illegible] view.

I made sure my [illegible] that for She-Hulk [illegible] with the history of the Marvel

LIKE AN ANGEL: An angel falling ready to kick some [illegible] (From *She-Hulk* #15.)

Universe. She's also always been very open with the world — once she gained control of her powers — with her identity and who she is. She's had Avengers training, and she is one of the people that would make you say, "Yeah, I want this person to save me if I'm in trouble." So it was real easy for me to wrap my head around the idea that she would have a level headed approach and would be able to explain it not just to other super-heroes, but also to the reader. So I presented: "This is She-Hulk and this is why she feels this way."

SPOTLIGHT: So now Jen has become an Agent of SHIELD, tracking down all the old enemies of her cousin, the Hulk.

DAN: Whether she likes it or not!

SPOTLIGHT: So is this her new status quo, and the status quo for the book?

DAN: For a while it is. She's dealing with the fact that Iron Man and his Illuminati cohorts/lunkies have shot her cousin into space. Some futurist Tony Stark is! He took the cat away, and all the mice are running around. The Hulk provided some very valuable services to Earth. Without the Hulk around, who's gonna stop the Abomination or *Zzzzax*? These are some big league heavy hitters, and it's up to our girl, the new Emerald Agent of SHIELD, to go after all of her cousin's rogues. To step up. (She's lucky she has no rogues gallery of her own!)

SPOTLIGHT: Yeah — Titania's out of the way, thanks to earlier events!

DAN: We don't have to worry about Titania, the Pink Elephant, or Ultima — that's it! That's her arsenal. She could play a hand of bridge with her rogues! (Laughing.)

SPOTLIGHT: Is She-Hulk aware of [illegible] what happened with her cousin?

DAN: So, not in *She-Hulk* #9 there was a clue. When she got mauled in Las Vegas, the villain was Gary Swanson. He was in [illegible] because he was the head of the Green Cross, the charity organization that cleans up after the Hulk and his disasters. He was wanting, [illegible] the Hulk's big feud with the Thing (see, before Civil War, *Fantastic Four* #[illegible]) to take heat, how the Green Cross are not taking a break. She-Hulk says, "That's great! You deserve a break." He says, "No, you don't understand, it's like the Hulk VANISHED OFF THE FACE OF THE EARTH. Earth, earth." She-Hulk says, "What?!" So there have been clues and hints.

As the *Planet Hulk* and *World War Hulk* arc continues, she'll become more and more aware that something suspicious is *going* on. And when it hits its *riotous* conclusion, the story is so big, it will be touched upon in later issues of *The Incredible Hulk*, and also has ramifications for *The Initiative*.

SPOTLIGHT: What about Jen's old [illegible]? Will she remain at the law office with her supporting cast [illegible] on the backburner?

DAN: We [illegible] we hit [illegible] Marvel. *Without* a plan, [illegible] what's [illegible] at the [illegible] time. [illegible] big things are [illegible] let [illegible] we know [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

SPOTLIGHT: Going back to the two [illegible] even read, what was the one moment in Jen's experience during the CW event that you could [illegible] to [illegible] one of [illegible] "[illegible] is not [illegible]"

DAN: [illegible]

SPOTLIGHT: [illegible] on that [illegible]

DAN: [illegible]

SPOTLIGHT: No [illegible]!

DAN: [illegible] that she was given [illegible] Man about how the [illegible] would [illegible]. The [illegible] of [illegible] world would [illegible] moment in *Civil War* for [illegible]. There's a moment in [illegible] Iron Man convinces [illegible] [illegible]

SPOTLIGHT: How [illegible] of a [illegible] for your [illegible] in She-Hulk [illegible] once you knew Civil War was [illegible]?

DAN: [illegible] to make [illegible] deal with [illegible] *insane* [illegible] we [illegible] [illegible] book!

[illegible] be [illegible] the Marvel [illegible] write [illegible] so [illegible] this [illegible] to jump in on a [illegible] had a fun [illegible] to [illegible] [illegible] as a kid [illegible] – titles would [illegible] as being crossover issues when all that [illegible] is an adventure [illegible] other [illegible], and then at [illegible] someone looks up [illegible] "[illegible]! A red [illegible]" – [illegible] to the [illegible]. And [illegible] to buy all [illegible] that are [illegible] to [illegible] [illegible] to [illegible]. We could [illegible] "Civil War" on [illegible] 9. [illegible] we [illegible].

But [illegible] a [illegible] effect on the Marvel Universe that, [illegible], it was fun [illegible] those [illegible] in She-Hulk. [illegible] me [illegible] "You [illegible] do [illegible]." I [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible]. "Wow, this [illegible] this [illegible] affect the Marvel Universe."

ART: SHE-HULK
NICK BRADSHAW

NICK has [illegible] books [illegible] for [illegible] 25 years, but he had never [illegible] for Marvel until [illegible] on board as the new [illegible] for [illegible]. [illegible] fog of *Civil War* [illegible] but [illegible], with [illegible] but [illegible] has [illegible] talked to him [illegible] with [illegible] in the [illegible] of *She-Hulk*.

SPOTLIGHT: [illegible] Marvel [illegible]? How did you come to [illegible] join the [illegible] and start [illegible] *She-Hulk*?

NICK: I got a call from Dan Slott. Dan and I [illegible] worked [illegible] on *Batman Adventures*. [illegible] were having [illegible] [illegible] on She-Hulk and Dan [illegible] I was [illegible] to [illegible] on board for a couple of [illegible] [illegible] them [illegible] [illegible] to [illegible] [illegible] to do the two [illegible], and when those were done [illegible] asked if I [illegible] which I did. [illegible] that they [illegible] if I would come [illegible].

SPOTLIGHT: What was it like jumping into the Marvel Universe [illegible] *Civil War*?

NICK: I don't think I realized what was [illegible]. It was [illegible] for me, and at first I [illegible] was just [illegible] so I didn't worry too much about it. As [illegible] we were in the middle of [illegible] [illegible] I was in the [illegible] of [illegible] so [illegible] I was [illegible] the [illegible] out on time [illegible].

SPOTLIGHT: Did you run across any [illegible] upon [illegible] the MU [illegible]?

THE ABOMINATION: Worst. [illegible] Ever.
(From She-Hulk #15.)

RICK: It wasn't really a problem, but it was a challenge learning all the new characters. I had never drawn the Marvel characters. I grew up with them but they had changed considerably, and it was like learning a new language. "What does Iron Man's armor look like now?" "What do these people's costumes look like?" I had to do a lot of research, and fortunately the office helped me out a lot and I picked up stuff off the internet, learning about the characters and what they look like now. But that was fun; I enjoy doing that.

SPOTLIGHT: Dan Slott's stories seem to involve a lot of the minutia of the Marvel Universe, the lesser-known characters. How did you handle that?

RICK: I'm kind of a stickler to research. I like to get it right. I know that people out there are going to know when something is supposed to look like.

SPOTLIGHT: The tone of She-Hulk has always been a very bright, humorous one, and your experience drawing books based on popular series has been a great fit. Did you pick up that tone right away? How did that affect your style?

RICK: When I came on board, they sent me issues of what had come before. I looked at what Juan Bobillo had done, and his art was very clean, very linear, with not a lot of interior detail on the figures, and I also felt we had worked with the color. I thought that if I could pull some of that idea and maybe make the characters a little more realistic than what Juan had done, that I could achieve a good midway point, where the readers were getting something they were used to, but a little different.

SPOTLIGHT: The Marvel Universe has gotten a little darker in the aftermath of Civil War. Will that spill over into She-Hulk?

RICK: The tone is staying a little darker. There's still humor in the book. Pete Wyngarde, the big thing that happens is that she is drafted as an agent of SHIELD. The more she Hulk gets involved has to do with the Skrull Villains, and Skrulls is the big plot point in the book. So she's drafted, and for a few issues she's dealing with the villains. So it's still light, darker than everything else, but there are still comedy in Jen's relationship at the legal office with the other attorneys, and there's good wonderful sense of whimsy and humor throughout the book. So it's still lighthearted when it needs to be but not a prime-time laugh riot.

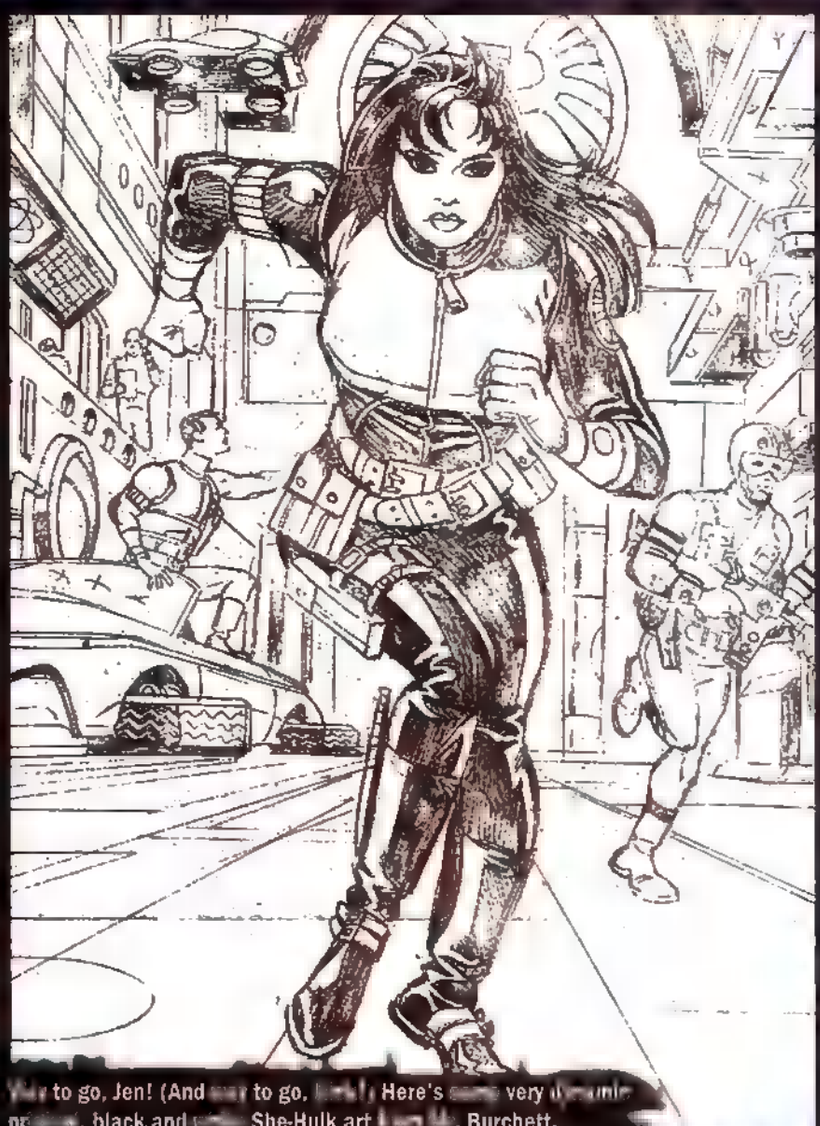
SPOTLIGHT: Any favorite moments you've drawn?

RICK: The first SHIELD issue was a funny transition. She and Jarvis villains are fighting a giant robot and after they've defeated the robot, she's looking to Iron Man. She asks him about recruitment and he's all, "Oh, we don't all approve of people going to effectively become agents of SHIELD. He says, "No, no. You'll never be an agent of SHIELD. Don't worry about it." She turn the page and he's suiting up in a SHIELD uniform.

SPOTLIGHT: Speaking for yourself as a series performer, what's the aftermath of Civil War like for you? Has it been a rush (in good ways or bad ways)?

RICK: As an outsider, it's a lot to take in. Coming into this cold, I'm reading about it a little bit at a time. It's really hard to pass up something like this because it's fun reading to compare it to it all. It's very interesting to me, and I'm interested to see how it plays out and how it affects Jen's life in the long term. It's not stagnating, no pun intended, so I'm going to be more a reader than a participant in this case. It's going to take time to see the things unreel.

We at MARVEL SPOTLIGHT are very happy that Dan Slott is spending time telling the Marvel U in an exciting new direction, and we don't mind seeing Rick Burchett have a full-time role in helping Dan with the task!



Way to go, Jen! (And way to go, Rick!) Here's some very dynamic original, black and white She-Hulk art from Mr. Burchett.

CIVIL WAR AFTERMATH

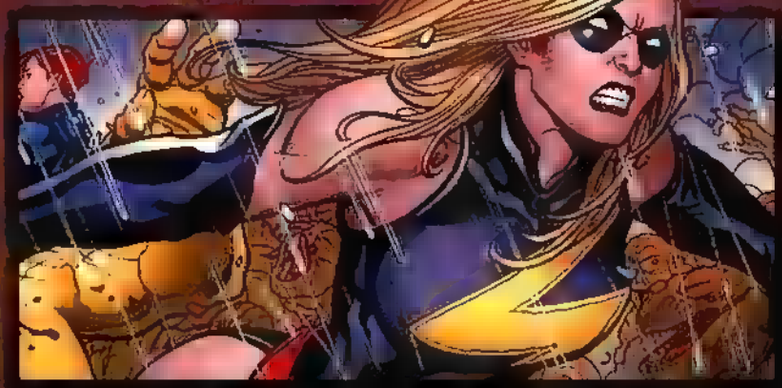
23 24

NEW AVENGERS NEW AVENGERS

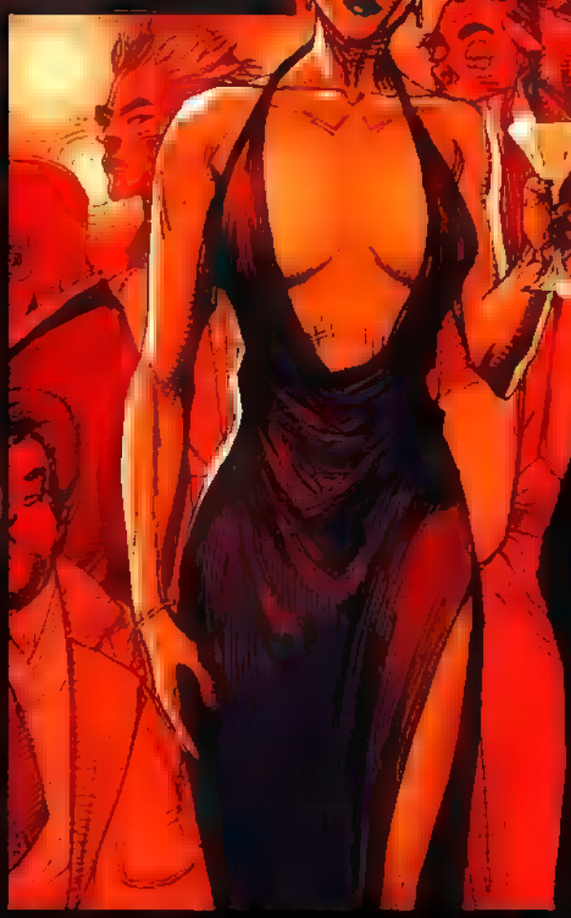
CIVIL WAR CIVIL WAR

NEW AVENGERS MIGHTY AVENGERS THE INITIATIVE

You thought *Dreadnaught* did a number on Earth's Mightiest Heroes? Well, *Civil War* has fractured the Avengers like never before. The New Avengers are now officially underground, the Mighty Avengers are taking on would-be world beaters with full government approval, and the Initiative? Only Dan Slott knows what's going on with that new Avengers! *Great Scoundrel* got hold of three of the major players for the post-CW Avengers aftermath, interviewing Brian Michael Bendis (writer of both *New* and *Mighty Avengers*), Leinil Francis Yu (artist of *New Avengers*), and Dan Slott (writer of *Avengers: The Initiative*). We discussed their plans for what is sure to be the most watched family of books on the Marvel universe!



MIGHTY AVENGERS: [illegible] includes Iron Man, [illegible] Black [illegible] Marvel and more! (Art by Frank Cho.)



NEW AVENGERS: The [illegible] for new New Avengers, drawn by Leinil Francis Yu.

the NEW *and the* MIGHTY:
BENDIS ON THE AVENGERS AFTERMATH

Love him or hate him, by now it really can't be disputed that Brian Michael Bendis has worked magic on the *Avengers* brand. Dribbling aimlessly for several years, *Avengers* was becoming the title that only diehard fans were still reading with any enthusiasm. Bendis came on the scene, asked why a book starring the foundational characters of the Marvel Universe (Cap, Iron Man, Thor and a wide range of other compelling characters) should be so moribund, and promptly used *Dissassembled* to shake the team to its core. Frantic fans screamed, "Don't shake the baby! Don't shake the baby!" But Bendis shook that baby – he shook it real good! And two and a half years and 27 issues later, the resulting sales successes and obvious popularity has left the naysayers as the only ones still crying. Story threads begun in *Avengers* have led to *Civil War* and the exciting new story possibilities in its aftermath. *Spotlight* tried to get Bendis to do a little dance over the *Avengers* crib, but believe it or not, he'd rather optimistically look forward with the franchise than look back and heckle the people who said he was doing everything the wrong way. That being the case, we had a pit stop with him before painful dental surgery would render him speechless – and the discussion was all about *Avengers*!

SPOTLIGHT: The events of *Civil War* have obviously shaken up the New Avengers line-up, and the new *Mighty Avengers* title, which will premiere at the same time, is stocked with familiar faces. Can you give a quick analysis of why there are going to be these two different Avengers teams?

BRIAN: There was the war and the war had a finale. There are winners and there are losers, and I know a lot of people feared that there wouldn't be. They would shake hands at the end, say, "I'm sorry," and then hug each other, but that's not what happened. There's a very large battle and casualties happened. In post-CW, you have the New Avengers – which pretty much includes the people who lost the war, but still will not give up what they believe in – and they are underground. Included are some of our biggest heroes in Marvel: Spider-Man, Wolverine; some of the bigger names in *New Avengers*: Luke Cage, Spider-Woman; plus joining the team are Dr. Strange, Iron Fist, Echo, and someone new will be taking the role of Ronin.

It will mingle the uniqueness of our Marvel Universe, dealing with the ongoing conspiracy that we laid out in the first arc of *New Avengers*. Plus, it'll be dealing with the fact that they are being chased by the Mighty Avengers and the Initiative, and dealing with the fallout in the super-villain community: one of the villains of the Marvel Universe rises to the level of kingpin of all super-villains, and this will be the Hood, which is the character that debuted in the Brian K. Vaughan mini-series a couple years ago. The Hood is an excellent new creation which I think is up there with the Sentry, Echo – just one of the great new ideas. And looking at *The Hood* series is kinda like the Robert Deniro chapters of *Godfather II*. Or looking at the birth of what will become hopefully one of the biggest villains that the Marvel Universe has seen in a long time. And again, not replacing Wilson Fisk – that's done. Those stories were told. But a whole new kind of idea that came about from my studies of organized crime throughout the century. This is what I did before I was in the super-hero world. I read a lot of crime comics and crime fiction and I'm kind of obsessed with organized crime. And after every major war in this country, there's a surge of organized crime. Someone really rises to the occasion, and usually it's the people you don't see coming. You go back to Murder Incorporated during WW II, Lucky Luciano and Bugsy Siegel...even the way the Jersey mob took a hold of things after the first Iraq war, which is kinda what *The Sopranos* is about. This is following that tradition and having the villains not be Doctor Doom or Magneto or someone you'd expect. It's someone who has nothing to lose and he takes hold of the opportunity

WHO IS RONIN? One of the central [illegible] of *New Avengers* will be [illegible] of the new Ronin! (Art [illegible] *NA* [illegible])

Frank Cho [illegible] from *Mighty Avengers* #1. The new team [illegible] Ares and Sentry on the team [illegible]

and rises to power, so the New Avengers will be dealing with that ongoing threat and hopefully that will be sprinkling out over other books as well. I sure as give it to the whole Marvel Universe to play with if that's what they want to do.

SPOTLIGHT: That's a great concept for the New Avengers who are going to be underground: take on another underground enemy.

BRIAN: And while they are chasing, they are being chased, and they are being chased by the Mighty Avengers, and the Mighty Avengers are the winners of the war. They are Tony's handpicked Avengers, which has never been their history. There's been voted on Avengers, there's Iron Avengers put together by fate (which even the New Avengers were originally). But this is the first time that Iron Man, who's now the director of S.H.I.E.L.D., who now controls every single super hero that's registered, gets to handpick what he thinks is the greatest Avengers team that could possibly be, one that fulfills every role that Avengers could possibly be called on to fill. And that's what the Mighty Avengers represent. And it's drawn by Frank Cho who drew *New Avengers* #45. This team is Ms. Marvel, Ares, Wonder Man, the Wasp, Black Widow, and the Sentry.

SPOTLIGHT: And they are all on board with Tony.

BRIAN: They are all on board, but you can realize that the war was horrible, the cost was high, but although they won, it's a very bittersweet win. So Ms. Marvel is given the task of leading this new team into this new era of corporate sponsored super heroes. But they handle very big threats. They are put together 15 minutes before Ultron attacks – and it's a new Ultron! It's a new A.I. construct, and we try to imagine a doomsday idea that falls in line with what our world global infrared would bring upon us. It isn't just some killer robot with a daddy complex, it's a real issue. They'll be fighting Dr. Doom, they'll be fighting a city full of Venoms when the Venom virus hits New York City – there's big big things happening, so it's kind of the flip side of what's going on in the *New Avengers*. But on top of it, they are in charge of rounding up those who were not found after the war. And that's pretty much the New Avengers...but they're the Mighty Avengers' friends! Luke and Jessica Jones are best friends with Carol Danvers. This is bad news, this is tough stuff, so secretly some of them are even excited to fight Ultron because it's one more thing they get to do before they have to go back for their friends!

SPOTLIGHT: I have a question that relates to you writing both *New Avengers* and *Mighty Avengers*. Some people would ask, "Why have Bendis write both titles? Why not give one of the titles over to another creator?"

BRIAN: This is even a question I asked myself. The fact of the matter is I kinda came up with the book titles and I came up with the unique voice for those titles and the artistic style for both titles. But at the same time, those titles were telling the same story. It's an ongoing story, and about six issues into the runs, you're going to discover that both books are telling the same story from the flip side...and they are both headed toward the same end point.

THE ART OF *new avengers:*

LEINIL FRANCIS YU

New Avengers has been blessed with an all-star lineup of artists since its inception. A litany of top talent has helped writer Brian Michael Bendis keep the title firmly entrenched in the number one sales slot for regular-shipping series over the last two-plus years: David Finch, Steve McNiven, Frank Cho, Mike Deodato, Jr., and now Leinil Francis Yu, who brings his arresting sense of detail on the "New" New Avengers to the book as new regular artist.

SPOTLIGHT: How comfortable are you as an artist drawing a team book like *New Avengers* with as big a cast as it has? Are there any strategies you've taken to get ready for *New Avengers* that might be new for you?

LEINIL: You know what, I'm not really bothered by it. In fact, it's only now that I realize that I'm actually working five times as hard. I'm taking just as much time as I was when I did *Ultimate Hulk vs. Wolverine* (even if that was a *much* simpler book to do)! I procrastinate more if the pages are simple and I work harder if the pages were insanely detailed and end up with the same pace...it's weird! I still remember taking a lot of time drawing that insanely simple page from *Ultimate Hulk vs. Wolverine* where all I did was draw a huge water splash in the ocean. I took longer to do that than a page with all the *New Avengers* on it. It's really about the deadlines; if they don't give me one – which is the case most of the time – then I'd spend a lot of time per issue.

One thing I realize now, though, is that the next time I'm given a solo book, I can breeze through it like crazy after dealing with 6-8 characters (in panel most of the time) and hundreds of Ninjas. It's actually a good thing for me.

SPOTLIGHT: We now know the cast of New Avengers to include Luke Cage, Spider-Woman, Wolverine, Iron Fist, Echo, Ronin and Dr. Strange. Which of the characters are you intimidated by drawing and which are ones you can't wait to get started on?

LEINIL: What? I thought this is top secret? I love all of them, but my current favorites are Doc Strange and Luke Cage cause I love drawing faces. I just love drawing Luke from different angles and lighting. If Wolverine didn't have a mask all the time, he'd be my top pick as well. I'll never get tired of drawing faces, and I guess this is the reason why a lot of guys enjoy my talking pages a lot.

SPOTLIGHT: Is this a book you would like to stay on for a while? Or will there continue to be a rotation of top artists like yourself and David Finch, Steve McNiven, and Frank Cho after six or so issues?

LEINIL: I'd love to have a solid *New Avengers* run. This is a book that Brian and David Finch made and I aim to continue. Dave's high quality art standards for as long as they want me there. It's all up to you guys!

SPOTLIGHT: What terms would you use to describe your style to new readers who aren't familiar with your work?

LEINIL: My work is stylized and dynamic (sounds cool, huh? Hee hee, I just made that up.) I know there is a movement towards photorealistic faces right now, but I'm holding my ground!

Excerpt artwork from Leinil Francis Yu in *New Avengers* #27

Frank Cho art from *Mighty Avengers*, with Iron Man leading a [illegible] team of heroes to face Earth's biggest threats!

AVENGERS: *the initiative*

Fall sees the release of the first issue of *Avengers: The Initiative*, the ambitious new limited (for now) series from writer Dan Slott (*She-Hulk*) and artist Stefano Caselli (*Civil War: Young Avengers/Runaways*). The tagline: "Marvel's army of super heroes is now a sometimes-army." The series plans to develop the 50-state initiative by focusing on some of the second-string heroes who run the program and work within it, as well as debuting some exciting new heroes. We're also, of course, going to see the Initiative in action, as we learn just how dangerous being a criminal can be in the new landscape. If you love the Marvel Universe and enjoy visiting its distant corners, this is the book for you. Fans accounts tag *Avengers: The Initiative* as one of the most exciting things to come out of the aftermath of *Civil War*.

Dan Slott has quickly developed a legion of devoted fans thanks to his energetic approach to lesser super-names — for both your benefit and their obscurity in equal measure. From his outlandish take on super-hero obscurity in the 616 limited series to the retro love letter of *The Thing* and *Spider-Man/Human Torch* series, Dan has brought boatloads of humor to his books to go along with his affection for all things Marvel. The book that made him a star is *She-Hulk* (and turn on its spotlight we'll talk about that book's new direction!) But for now, Dan rangled with him about his new plum assignment, *The Initiative!*

SPOTLIGHT: Much has been made about your pitch for the *Initiative* series. Before anyone outside Marvel's halls had any idea what the series was called or what it was about, they knew you made a pitch for a post-CW book that was a real knockout. What was it that made your pitch so well received?

DAN: I made every element of the pitch very meticulously, well thought-out, and on fifty dollar bills, then I just threw them! That's my "fifty" initiative for ya! *(Laughter.)*

It all came about because I got to see some of the *Civil War* stuff to get ready for *She-Hulk*, and I knew about the Fifty State Initiative. Tom told me it was something that wasn't going to be developed fully in *Civil War* and what would I do with something like that. We started spitballing back and forth and really fleshing it out and figuring out how it would work and how would you treat that book. And when it came time for that Marvel retreat, I threw it out to the room and told them what I would do with it. It just caught fire — people really liked it. People like Bendis and Quesada really threw their weight behind it. (Maybe I shouldn't say, "Threw their weight around." I'm in a glass house here; I have quite a tub!)

SPOTLIGHT: As a longtime Marvel zombie, what was it like to have your idea so received so enthusiastically by the people that basically steer the Marvel Universe?

DAN: Pretty darn cool. It's like that scene from Arthur, where the guy slaps Arthur and says, "You're that rich guy, right? How's it feel to have all that money?" "Great!" Should've seen that coming!

SPOTLIGHT: This book sure sounds like it would make a swell ongoing title. Why is it being launched as a limited series?

DAN: We really wanted to see what the reaction would be first. I feel silly about that now. Everyone in the room was saying, "This

THE INITIATIVE: The new Dan Slott [illegible] title! (Page 10 from *Initiative #1* by [illegible])

is an ongoing. This is an ongoing!" And the people saying, "No, no, no!" were me, Tom Brevoort and (Publisher) Dan Buckley. We said, "Calm down. Let's see how this goes first." But the artwork's been coming in from Stefano Caselli and it looks so gorgeous, and I'm not in a vacuum anymore. I'm with a creative team. Ideas are getting bounced around. Things are being [illegible], and all these great visuals are coming in. It just sparks so many more ideas and I'm like, "What was I thinking?! Let's do the Initiative for 30 issues! LOL!" There's so much stuff we can do with it.

SPOTLIGHT: I'm with you on that! What will the cast be?

DM: The cast of this book is the Marvel Universe. Look at the cover for Peter's sake. It's *huge*! There will be some key members of the Initiative, though, who have the people kind of running the show at the Initiative Branch. Of course, the goal is to end up with a team in all 50 states, but this is the main hub, the headquarters, and that comes first. It's called Camp Hammond, named after the late Jim Hammond, the original Human Torch — the first Marvel, and an actual military man. The main established characters we'll be following include:

War Machine: James Rhodes, close friend of Tony's, in a Caselli-designed new armor which looks awesome. I mean, the action figure now! **Yellowjacket:** Hank Pym, a member of the No-Reg team made with Tony and Reed. He's also going to be doing stuff down in "The Raft." (*Sorry, wasn't whistling.*) **Justice:** A team counselor. He's been an Avenger and a New Warrior and even been to prison. He spearheads a youth outreach program. **Peter Parker** will be running around there, too.

Some new characters include:

The Gauntlet: A hero for the armed forces who will be a drill sergeant. Just because we haven't seen him before doesn't mean he hasn't been running around doing things for the military. **Cloud Nine:** a young girl who discovers she has the power of flight, and does what any teenager would do — she flies around like an idiot! In the post-9/11 world, if you're a small [illegible] thing in an urban area, you're gonna get attacked! **Komodo:** this lizard girl, who's been dropped off at the lab by Dr. Curt Connors, the Lizard. What's her deal? **Trauma:** my favorite new character. He's the nuttiest [illegible], and his power is the most disturbing super hero power I've ever come up with (we're not gonna reveal it here, folks!). He's the breakout. I can feel it!

But in the, some of the fun is that everybody's gonna be there. If the camera pans a little to the left or right, you're gonna see everybody. We'll focus on different characters in different issues. Issue 2 focuses on the Pleasers, for instance. It's real. The biggest supporting character in this book is the Marvel Universe.

SPOTLIGHT: [illegible] a [illegible] of the [illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible] he [illegible] of the architects [illegible] because he [illegible] book of his own, we [illegible]

DAN: We've also [illegible] it [illegible] all the pills! [illegible] has [illegible] to [illegible]

SPOTLIGHT: [illegible] think [illegible] series?

DAN: [illegible] in the [illegible] in [illegible] little [illegible] to him by [illegible] His [illegible] and [illegible] will we [illegible] that [illegible] in *Initiative* [illegible] Issue 2 is a [illegible] Hank [illegible]

[illegible] to take a step back [illegible] the [illegible] After [illegible] had the [illegible] to [illegible] Ant Man II [illegible] what [illegible] him. Now [illegible] not [illegible] many left!

SPOTLIGHT: [illegible] are bad luck!

DAN: [illegible]

SPOTLIGHT: It [illegible] like [illegible] *The Initiative* [illegible] to [illegible] a [illegible] tone [illegible] Marvel [illegible] that [illegible] more [illegible] How would [illegible] it [illegible] in tone [illegible]

DAN: [illegible] It [illegible] at [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible] humor from the [illegible] of it. [illegible] at the Marvel [illegible] as a [illegible] at [illegible] The [illegible] U has [illegible] of [illegible] now and then a character takes off, like [illegible] a [illegible] are [illegible] Ronin, but [illegible] are so [illegible] who [illegible] lack of a [illegible] so [illegible] that [illegible] favorites that [illegible] see, [illegible] we'll hit [illegible] in [illegible] in [illegible] you [illegible] in the [illegible] in *The* [illegible] it'll be more [illegible]

If [illegible] as in [illegible] a [illegible] on [illegible] and make a funny [illegible] If [illegible] in *The Initiative*, [illegible] a [illegible] chance [illegible] a [illegible] in [illegible] mouth.

More exciting page art from *Initiative* artist Stefano Caselli!

CIVIL WAR: AFTERMATH

THE COMING OF OMEGA FLIGHT

Writer: Michael Avon Oeming
Artist: Scott Kolins

It's only been two years since the "All-New, All-Different" *Alpha Flight* closed up shop with its twelfth issue, leaving a lot of *AF* fans crying in their beer (Labatt's, natch)! But, boy, that wasn't anything compared to the crying when *New Avengers #16* hit stands last summer, with the infamous Steve McNiven double-page spread of a bunch of dead Canadian heroes. It may have only taken Steve three days to draw that spread, but it only took three seconds for millions of indignant Flight faithful to hit the internet with their cries of "We hate Bendis!" (Well, it certainly felt like millions!) Well, look at what Bendis hath begotten: a new Flight title has risen from the ashes of those seemingly dead heroes, with *Civil War* the spark that has ignited the phoenix! (No, not Jean Grey...I'm workin' a heavy-handed metaphor here, bunky!)

Reining in that rising phoenix of a super-team is none other than Bendis' *Powers* partner, Michael Avon Oeming, artist turned Marvel super hero scribe *(Ares, Thor)* and penciller Scott Kolins *(Marvel Team-Up, Earth's Mightiest Heroes)*. Both guys are ready to take their act to the Great White North and do it Canadian style, with an Omega Flight that is guaranteed to take even the hardiest Flight fan by surprise! We had a blast here at Spotlight opening up the floor to Mike and Scott in a joint interview about *Omega Flight!*

SPOTLIGHT: So are you Canadian? Ever been to Canada? Do you know anyone who is Canadian? I assume you like hockey? And beer? And moose? (Or is that mooses?)

MICHAEL: No, I'm straight out of New Jersey and I've only ever met one Canadian, Bob and Doug McKenzie. I count them as one person for some reason.

SCOTT: I was raised in Wisconsin, so I always think of them as cousins. I may have been to Canada for a visit when I was little – my Dad used to fish up there a long time ago Up in Duluth (Minnesota – on the border.) I bought my first comic that had the cover price being 10p. I've now been invited to a couple conventions up there, can't wait to go. Beautiful country.

SPOTLIGHT: So we we had a Scotsman and a Canuck writing and drawing the good ol' American *Civil War* (Millar and McNiven for those internationally challenged folk reading this), and now we have a Jersey Boy and a Cheesehead taking on the Canadian super-team! What can you say to reassure Marvel's Canadian fans that their unique culture is going to be respected in the pages of *Omega Flight?*

MICHAEL: Honestly, I've done a lot of research on Canada, and the subtle differences in culture and attitude. I have more than a few Canadian friends. I am staying away from Quebec because it's a slightly different culture than the rest of Canada and I just don't want to mess it up. Still researching that stuff if we go past issue 5.

SCOTT: We're talking about comics right? Super powers? Saving people?

SPOTLIGHT: Yeah, but that kind of stuff is different up there, Scott. Kinda like cover prices. *(Laughter.)* Omega Flight's team roster is even loopier than the New Avengers! *Civil War* done did some nutty stuff to the MU, eh? Without getting specific about characters and their motives (gotta have some surprises when we read it!), what can you say in general about this team composition and how they all fit together?

MICHAEL: Well, the team is lead by Alpha Flight's own Talisman... well, her and USAgent. They are polar opposites and it's really fun to watch them clash. I think there is a certain kind of energy there that can only be let out through conflict. Talisman is very Canadian, USAgent is your stereotypically obnoxious American. Then there's Julia Carpenter (aka Arachne) and her daughter Rachelle. Julia is much more open minded, she's very up to moving to Canada to restart her life and has no problems becoming a Canadian, so she's somewhere between USAgent and Talisman in that way. Rachelle is just fun and hopefully that will show. Beta Ray Bill is the outsider and Guardian is...whoops! Almost dropped that one!

SPOTLIGHT: OK, now let's talk individuals in the lineup: USAgent is in the group, and he's one of two characters who has a storyline picking up directly from a story told in *Civil War*. When last we saw him in the *Choosing Sides* one-shot, he was being made an offer he couldn't refuse to go to Canada. (Rich in irony: cross the border to Canada during wartime to serve your country!) Can you discuss John Walker and what he's all about in your eyes?

MICHAEL: I love him. He's a jerk, but he has a heart of gold. His motives are pure, though is attitude isn't. I love that kind of character. He's a jerk, but ultimately more noble than anyone else on the team.

SCOTT: I actually really like him now. I'm a big Captain America fan, so any clown that tries to rob Cap of his Red, White and Blue is in trouble with me, but Mike's take is a good one and has turned me around on how fun and interesting he is.

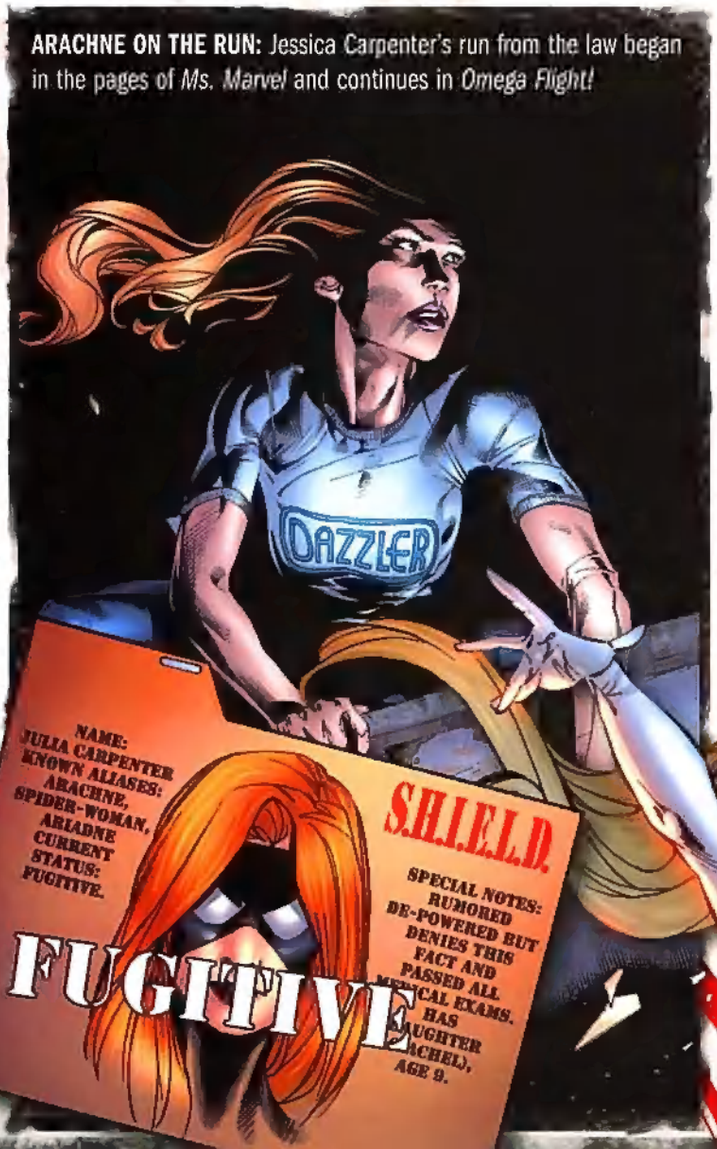
SPOTLIGHT: Arachne: on the run from the law in *Ms. Marvel*, she would appear to be bringing some heavy baggage to Omega Flight. Is there gonna be friction between her and John Walker, who is supposed to be pretty gung ho about law and order and all that?

MICHAEL: She and Walker have a history since they were teammates in Force Works together, so we play off of that. The friction is more playful because they have a history. They won't take crap from each other, but they don't hate each other in any way. There's a respect there.

SCOTT: But you're right, she's broken the law and is a headstrong character.

SPOTLIGHT: Beta Ray Bill: Mike, I bet you have some cool stuff to say about this fella! Last I saw him, he was getting ready to walk the line during Ragnarok in *Thor*. Are there going to be any flashbacks to the fabled and mysterious events that occurred in "Ragnarok"?

MICHAEL: There are some minor flashbacks, but not much. I figured the more back story I give him, the more alienated he'll be to the reader, so I'm trying to present him fresh and slowly unravel that stuff if we can. Bill is the noble outsider, and a ferocious fighter – he gets into it with...whoops, almost did it again! As far as I'm concerned, he's as strong as he was when he last fought Thor and kicked his butt.



ARACHNE ON THE RUN: Jessica Carpenter's run from the law began in the pages of *Ms. Marvel* and continues in *Omega Flight!*

SCOTT: He's just cool.

SPOTLIGHT: Sasquatch and Talisman: OK, now we're in familiar Flight territory. I assume you've consulted with John Byrne on how to use these characters properly? What's shakin' with Sasquatch these days?

MICHAEL: Yeah, I did ask John, but he just said something about reprints and he stamped my head with his rubber stamp signature. I took that to mean he didn't mind much, so I was free to do what I want. Sasquatch is really interesting, especially as Walter. He's somehow survived the death of Alpha Flight and dealing with that has been great fun as a writer...though not so much for Walter. It's really made him and Talisman very close.

SCOTT: Sasquatch is an amazing character and one of the best designs in Marveldom. Mike and I have tons of ideas for him, many beyond what's coming in the five-issue arc. Hopefully we'll get a chance to play that out. I've been waiting years to get to draw him - he's awesome!

SPOTLIGHT: Guardian: OK, this has gotta be a misprint. Correct me if I'm wrong, but this guy's dead. I remember the day when *Alpha Flight #12* came out...it was pathetic. The guys on my street came over to shoot some hoops and my mom turned 'em away: "He needs some alone time," she said. It was a rough day. I mean, Guardian is dead, right?

MICHAEL: Dead? Well, it's Marvel and who in Marvel other than two or three people ever stay dead? Besides, it could be anyone. It could be Aunt May finally stepping up and getting some powers.

SCOTT: C'mon, Bucky's back – there are no rules anymore. Just pay attention to the story in front of you. I cried when Jean died, but just because she's back now doesn't mean that *X-Men #137* wasn't one of the best issues Marvel ever printed!

SPOTLIGHT: How far back do you guys go with *Alpha Flight?* Here's my Alpha Flight cred: I'm a Flight fan because I'm a Machine Man fan! (There's a couple more fans out there like me, too!) Do you go back to when AF didn't even have their own title and they were mixing it up in the pages of *Uncanny X-Men* and ol' X-51? Or is this whole Canadian super-team thing all new to you?

SCOTT: From the beginning! I was reading those first X-Men appearances waaay back then, and waited for the brand new monthly to come out. Still got the second issue of *Marvel Age* interviewing Byrne about the "new book." Loved the characters and the book from day one.

MICHAEL: I confess I was never a fan. I knew of them as a kid, but that was it. I once pitched an Alpha Flight series thinking there could be something interesting done with them, but at the time, Marvel wanted nothing to do with *Alpha Flight*, so it never happened.

"Sasquatch is an amazing character and one of the best designs in Marveldom. Mike and I have tons of ideas for him, many beyond what's coming in the five-issue arc. Hopefully we'll get a chance to play that out."

– Scott Kolins, *Omega Flight* artist

Art by Steve McNiven, from New *Avengers #16.*

SCOTT: I had an AF pitch in too. I wanted to do it like the *Earth's Mightiest Heroes* series I worked on, the early makings of *Alpha Flight*. Still hope to do that someday.

SPOTLIGHT: Are any other "Flights" running around that we need to know about? Is Alpha Flight still intact and, say, taking care of Alberta or Manitoba or something? Or is Omega Flight currently the only group of heroes on the Canadian scene?

MICHAEL: I don't know my full Latin, so there could be...

SCOTT: *(Laughter.)* Wait, didn't Bendis kill Alpha Flight? I thought I heard that?

SPOTLIGHT: Ahhh....cagey answers! I like it! *[This is Spotlight, we're not supposed to like cagey answers – Ed.]* So, did you have any say over which characters would be part of *Omega Flight?* Or were you given this roster and told to run with it?

MICHAEL: Honestly, it was hard choosing because of availability. We almost had Penance, and a few others that I can't mention. Part of the choosing was just assessing who was available, but ultimately I think it's my job to take anyone and make them interesting, make them work. I like these cats; it's pretty much a clear slate to build great characters on.

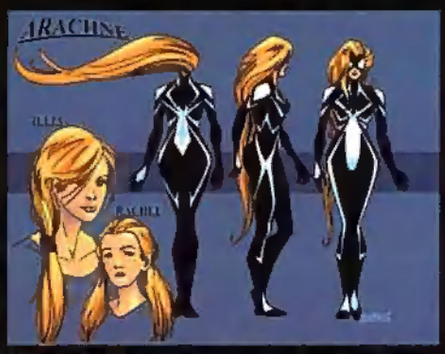
SCOTT: Penance? I didn't know that? I came in after the group had been chosen. But yeah, my job is the same just on the art side. I have to figure out the best look for whoever I'm working on.

SPOTLIGHT: On the same theme, Mike: as an artist, I'm sure you have visual ideas that pop up in your head when you're writing your scripts, either for page layouts or character designs. Do you restrict that part of the creative process when you're writing, or do you share all these ideas with your artists? And in the case of *Omega Flight*, how is it working with Scott as far as that goes?

MICHAEL: No, I let Scott do his thing because he is amazing. I really just stay out of his way and write down as little direction as possible. Sometimes when I'm writing I'll do some character sketches or something, but for the most part, when an artist just kicks butt like Scott, I just let him do his thing.

SCOTT: *(Faces Mike.)* I love you too, Mike! *(Faces interviewer.)* But he does write in some art ideas from time to time, as any writer for comics should. The artist has final say of course, but I encourage all writers to think of their scripts visually as well (It's comics fer cryin' out loud!). Should these three panels be linked? How many actions do I have in this panel? Will it be confusing? What is the pace? Is it slow and majestic with long panels or very fast and tight with a bunch of vertical shots? But it's a matter of everyone being the best at their craft – which means understanding how the other parts work as well. I do my best storytelling when I also think as a writer (and as an inker, letter and colorist!) while I'm drawing. Reading everything I can into the dialogue, panel descriptions, any discussions with the

ALPHA FLIGHT FALLEN: The last time we saw AF in *New Avengers #16*, things weren't looking so good.



Omega Flight character designs by artist Scott Kolins.

writer and taking into account the history or stature of the characters involved. It can get complex, but it's also a lot of fun when it works.

SPOTLIGHT: This series was originally slated to be an ongoing, but it has since been adjusted to be a five-issue mini-series. What say you about that? What kind of rallying cry should go out to the fans who do want to see this as an ongoing title?

MICHAEL: Hey, if they want to see more, lets just make sure they pre-order the book. Solid numbers is what we need. If the support is there, it's there and we get to do more. If not, it's not the end of Omega or Alpha Flight. Remember, it's Marvel, where Hell has an open door policy.

SCOTT: They do? No wonder my phone gets hot when I'm talking with Andy *[Schmidt, OF editor]*! He has sounded a little different lately.

SPOTLIGHT: When are we gonna see Wolverine? (Pssst: he's Canadian!)

MICHAEL: When Canada lowers its taxes...or we need a bump in sales.

SPOTLIGHT: Mike, on a more personal level, you received great acclaim in comics first as an artist, drawing *Powers* with Brian Michael Bendis. Where do you see your career going in the future, particularly with Marvel? Are you going to bring your considerable imagination as an artist more to the fore? Or are you going to try and continue writing?

MICHAEL: I love drawing and writing for Marvel. I plan on drawing more for Marvel...and doing more writing. *Powers* is there and going strong. I'm working on the next *Powers* annual (which I'm actually fully writing), and I have a few drawing projects lined up there as well. I love Marvel. Some of my best work is there, such as *Ares* and my *What If?: Thor* issue I drew. I continue to do creator owned stuff too, such as the *Mice Templar*, my next creator owned series from Image. I'm insane. I think I'm obsessive compulsive, but at least it's with writing and drawing and not counting shoes or something.

So until Walter Langkowski starts counting the bunny slippers in Talisman's closet, Make Yours Omega Flight! Look for the first issue of Oeming and Kolins' five-issue mini-series that hits stands in April. And pre-order the first issue. We want this sucker to go long – Machine Man would want you to!

Also, if you want to keep up with Mike's career, shoot him an email at oeming@aol.com and request to be added to his email newsletter list!

CANADIAGENT? John Walker, aka USAgent, is sent to Canada during war time in Oeming and Kolins' *Civil War: Choosing Sides* one-shot.

CIVIL WAR IN COLLECTED EDITIONS

Now that things are winding down, you can reread your favorite stories (or read them for the first time) in the many collected editions that are set to reprint the entirety of the Civil War event! We've whittled the list down in easy-to-analyze segments that will help assist you in your reading experience.

ESSENTIAL READING:
The core reading experience!

- ☐ CIVIL WAR TPB
  Civil War 1-7
- ☐ CIVIL WAR: THE ROAD TO CIVIL WAR TPB
  Amazing Spider-Man 529-531; FF 536-537; New Avengers: Illuminati
- ☐ CIVIL WAR: FRONT LINE BOOK 1 TPB
  Civil War: Front Line 1-6
- ☐ CIVIL WAR: FRONT LINE BOOK 2 TPB
  Civil War: Front Line 7-11

THE PRIME TIME PLAYERS:
Iron Man, Cap and the heroes at the front lines of the conflict!

- ☐ NEW AVENGERS VOL. 5: CIVIL WAR PREMIERE HC/TPB
  New Avengers 21-25
- ☐ CIVIL WAR: CAPTAIN AMERICA
  Captain America 22-24, Winter Soldier: Winter Kills
- ☐ CIVIL WAR: IRON MAN TPB
  Iron Man 13-14, Iron Man/Captain America: Casualties of War, CW: The Confession
- ☐ CIVIL WAR: AMAZING SPIDER-MAN TPB
  Amazing Spider-Man 532-538
- ☐ CIVIL WAR: FANTASTIC FOUR TPB
  Fantastic Four 538-543
- ☐ CIVIL WAR: WOLVERINE TPB
  Wolverine 42-48

THE FULL COURSE:
Civil War embroils the MU

- ☐ CIVIL WAR: MARVEL UNIVERSE TPB
  CW: The Initiative, CW: Choosing Sides, CW: The Return, She-Hulk 8
- ☐ CIVIL WAR: PETER PARKER, SPIDER-MAN TPB
  Sensational Spider-Man 28-34
- ☐ CIVIL WAR: THUNDERBOLTS TPB
  Thunderbolts 101-105
- ☐ CIVIL WAR: WAR CRIMES TPB
  Civil War: War Crimes, Underworld 1-5
- ☐ CIVIL WAR: X-MEN
  Civil War: X-Men 1-4, handbook pages
- ☐ CIVIL WAR: X-MEN UNIVERSE TPB
  Cable & Deadpool 30-32, X-Factor 8-9
- ☐ CIVIL WAR: YOUNG AVENGERS & RUNAWAYS TPB
  Civil War: Young Avengers 1-4, handbook pages
- ☐ MS. MARVEL VOL. 2: CIVIL WAR PREMIERE HC/TPB
  Ms. Marvel 6-10, Ms. Marvel Special
- ☐ HEROES FOR HIRE VOL. 1: CIVIL WAR TPB
  Heroes for Hire 1-5
- ☐ PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL VOL. 1: CIVIL WAR PREMIERE HC/TPB
  Punisher War Journal 1-4
- ☐ BLACK PANTHER: CIVIL WAR TPB
  Black Panther 19-25

THE RESOURCE MATERIAL:

- ☐ CIVIL WAR COMPANION TPB
  CW Files, CW: Battle Damage Report, Marvel Spotlight: Mark Millar/Steve McNiven, Marvel Spotlight: CW Aftermath, Daily Bugle: CW Special Edition
- ☐ CIVIL WAR POSTER BOOK